



THE EXHIBITION of Omar El-Nagdi's *The Last Supper in Jerusalem*, alongside other works by the artist in the foyer of Al-Ahram's main building on Giza Street, coincides with the 50th anniversary of the partition of Palestine. The triptych, writes Ibrahim Nafie in the forward to the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, expresses horror "at tyranny, indifference to the plight of one's fellows and the monstrous disregard of human rights"

Egypt-Qatar rapprochement

PRESIDENT Hosni Mubarak and the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, arrived in Riyadh yesterday for reconciliation talks sponsored by Saudi Arabia.

Before his departure from Doha, Sheikh Hamad said he would meet in Riyadh with President Mubarak and King Fahd "to correct the misunderstanding and express our regret for what happened between the two brotherly countries. We are doing this in line with our Arab values and ethics which bring together the [Arab] brothers."

Food barriers

IRAQ stepped up pressure on the UN Security Council by threatening to suspend oil exports under the "oil for food" accord by the end of the week unless a distribution plan of humanitarian shipments formulated by the UN secretary-general was approved.

Baghdad accused the US and Britain of obstructing food and medicine contracts, claiming that 80 contracts from the first phase of the accord, which ended in June, have yet to be approved by the UN sanctions committee.

Sorely missed

IT IS with great sadness that *Al-Ahram Weekly* announces the death of Stephen Nimr, who died peacefully in the early hours of the morning of 1 December after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Stephen's work at the *Weekly*, both as a translator and supervising the sports pages, combined both family traditions — his grandfather, Faris Pasha Nimr, founded the magazine *Al-Muqattam* and the daily newspaper *Al-Muqattam* in the 1890s following his flight from Lebanon to Egypt, after receiving a death sentence for political activities — and personal interests — he had himself qualified for Wimbledon in the 1940s, and continued to play a mean game of golf until the debilitating effects of illness kept him from the greens.

Stephen Nimr will be sorely missed by his colleagues. His unerring courtesy, impeccable manners and instinctive sense of savoir faire are all too seldom encountered. Perhaps such qualities have always been uncommon. And with the death of Stephen Nimr, a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, they become even rarer.

Hawking a new map

A second redeployment should be good news for the Palestinians. But not, writes Graham Usher, when the plans are drawn up by a hawk in dove's clothing

Last Sunday — and nearly three months overdue — the Israeli cabinet agreed "in principle" to implement a second military redeployment in the West Bank. If the Palestinian leadership was swift to dismiss the proposal, this was less because of the vagaries of the offer than because of the Likud vision of a final settlement that underlies it.

Nevertheless, the AP reported yesterday that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is due to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Paris on Friday and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Geneva on Saturday to try to broker an agreement on implementation of the Israeli proposal.

Despite Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that the decision marks "a historic opportunity to advance the peace", the offer makes no mention of either the size of the redeployment or when the transfer to Palestinian control would occur. These are conditional on the Palestinian Authority (PA) fulfilling its "responsibilities" as set down in the January 1997 Hebron agreement, primarily to complete the "revising" of the Palestinian Charter, combat "terror and prevent violence" in the self-rule areas and cease all "governmental activity" in East Jerusalem.

But there is also a new condition, expressed in the cabinet communiqué issued after the meeting. Prior to the redeployment being carried out, the cabinet will undertake "a thorough discussion to... formulate its plans for the final status negotiations", which Netanyahu wants to commence once the second redeployment is completed.

The "plans" are to determine those parts of the Occupied Territories Israel will seek to keep in any final settlement with the Palestinians. These are "security zones vital to the state of Israel, settlement areas and

other vital interests, including water and historical Jewish sites". Once a cabinet consensus on these areas is reached, Israel will decide the scale and pace of the redeployment and then make its offer to the PA.

The new condition bears the signature of National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, who, together with Netanyahu, Foreign Minister David Levy and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, will form a ministerial committee to draw up Israel's "map of interests" for the cabinet's approval. And it is because of Sharon's involvement that Israel's offer should be seen not only as a diversionary tactic but also as a real strategy which, if left unchecked, could fix once and for all the parameters of the final status negotiations.

Sharon's emergence as an apparent advocate of reaching a final settlement with the Palestinians has left many observers scratching their heads. One the one hand, Israel's foremost hawk appears to be sprouting the plumage of a dove, telling his settler constituency that under Oslo Israel has to carry out a second redeployment and accepting gloomily that "a Palestinian state is coming into existence" in the West Bank whether Israel likes it or not. But this dove has claws, as Sharon's scenario for Palestinian statehood makes clear.

According to a classified Foreign Ministry summary leaked to the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* on 25 November, Sharon has been urging the Americans to accept a final arrangement with the Palestinians in which Israel would annex a 7-10 kilometre seam east of the Green Line and a 20km seam west of the Jordan River, including the whole of the Jordan Valley. Sharon also wants Israel to control all crossing points into the Palestinian "state", including the Gaza airport and harbour and establish at least 13 by-pass roads in

the West Bank to service Jewish settlements, all of which would stay "intact". Greater Jerusalem and the West Bank's water resources — needless to say — would remain under exclusive Israeli sovereignty.

The plan would be risible were it not for the fact that the Israeli cabinet has just approved a further redeployment that "in principle" expresses it. Thus the cabinet offer makes no mention of a third redeployment, which, under the Hebron agreement, Israel is obliged to carry out by "mid-1998" and which Palestinians see as essential if they are to unite their segregated cantons into a contiguous territory ahead of any final negotiations on borders. Nor does the offer make any reference to the other interim issues such as the Gaza airport and harbour and a "safe passage" between Gaza and the West Bank, unsurprisingly given Sharon's insistence that such exits should be under Israeli control.

There is little doubt that Sharon's vision is shared by Netanyahu. Asked what he would do should Yasser Arafat decide that Oslo is over and declare unilaterally a Palestinian state, Netanyahu was quoted in the Israeli daily *Maariv* on Tuesday as saying, "If they [the Palestinians] declare an independent state, I will immediately annex the Jordan Valley to Israel, and additional territories. Perhaps the entire territory".

Arafat is unlikely to make any such declaration. His aim rather is to prevent the second redeployment gaining international currency by ensuring that no other party accepts it.

On the day of the cabinet decision, Arafat dispatched Palestinian negotiator, Nabil Shaath, to Cairo to sound out Egyptian reactions to Israel's offer. The next day Egypt's Foreign Minister, Amr Moussa, said the cabinet decision did not meet "Palestinian aspira-

tions". At a meeting with Jordan's prime minister, Abdel-Salam Majall, on Tuesday, Arafat urged King Hussein to support all parts of the Hebron agreement, especially the "three redeployments".

The Palestinian leader will also have been pleased with the response of Israel's Labour-led opposition. In an unusually harsh denunciation, Labour leader, Ehud Barak, described the cabinet decision as "totally irrelevant" and said it had "nothing to do with the peace process". He also instructed his MPs to support a no-confidence motion in the government, which failed narrowly, by 45 votes to 50.

But the critical response is that of the Americans, who, true to form, have been deeply ambiguous. Welcoming the cabinet decision as "a step in the right direction", State Department spokesman James Rubin would not be drawn on whether the redeployment met the criteria of "significance and credibility" that Madeleine Albright had demanded when she met Netanyahu in London last month. "We're going have to look at the details and see how far it goes," was all Rubin would say.

What is less ambiguous is the cabinet's attitude to settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza. So far from calling for a freeze or "time out" on settlement building, the communiqué calls on the Israeli government to "take the necessary steps for the continued existence and strengthening of West Bank settlements". Sharon had reportedly wanted the wording to be "acceleration". But this is semantics. One day after the cabinet vote, the Israeli press reported that the government had approved the construction of 900 houses at the Alfei Menashe settlement in the West Bank and 26 houses at the tiny Nisanit settlement in Gaza.

Nation rallies against terrorism

As opposition parties rallied behind the government in the battle against terrorism, Prime Minister Ganzouri ruled out any dialogue with Islamist militants. Shaden Shehab reports

Prime Minister Kamel El-Ganzouri, denying reports leaked by London-based militants that a dialogue was underway between the government and Islamist groups, insisted that five of the six Luxor assassinations were killed by police fire. Meanwhile, opposition party leaders, who met with Ganzouri on Monday, pledged support for the government in its war against terrorism.

Ganzouri, at a meeting with editors-in-chief on Tuesday, described reports that a "semi-official" personality had begun mediation efforts between the government and the militant groups as "unfounded".

The claim was made in London by Yasser Serri, sentenced to death in absentia for his role in an abortive 1994 attempt on the life of Prime Minister Atef Sidki. Islamist figures and security sources, though, insist that Serri only represents himself. "He is only seeking media attention by circulating such reports," an Islamist source in Cairo said.

Ganzouri, denying rumours of a mass suicide, said that five of the six Luxor assassinations were killed by fire from a lone police officer after the gunmen were trapped inside a mountain cave.

Initial reports following the 17 November massacre, in which 58 tourists and four Egyptians were killed, had said that the five assailants killed a sixth comrade, who was wounded by police fire, because they could not carry him as they attempted to escape.

Then they hijacked an empty tourist bus, which they abandoned when they realised that police were giving chase, and took refuge inside the cave.

What happened afterwards remains unclear. An eye-witness, who claimed

that he was outside the cave along with a police officer, said that they heard shooting inside the grotto. When he and the officer went inside, they found that four of the assailants had been shot and killed and the fifth was wounded. The witness concluded that the four had either killed themselves or killed each other. The fifth was killed by the police officer.

But Ganzouri said that he had received a forensic report, which affirmed that the five had been killed by the police officer. Ganzouri, denying another press report, said the medical examination also proved that the six gunmen had been circumcised in their childhood.

Opposition party leaders vowed support for the government in its confrontation with the terrorists but some of them had reservations.

"Opposition parties are duty bound to stand with the government in fighting terrorism," said Ibrahim Shukri, leader of the Islamist-oriented Labour Party, "but we have to repeal the emergency law because it leads to negative consequences."

The emergency laws, in force since President Anwar El-Sadat's assassination in 1981 by Jihad militants, empower police to round up suspects and detain them for long periods without trial. The law has been one of the government's principal weapons in its war with the militants.

No'man Gomaa, deputy chairman of the Wafd Party, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that the opposition and the government agreed on "mutual cooperation. It is our duty to do all that we can to fight terrorism." But Gomaa cautioned that terrorism was an offshoot of poverty and what

he called a "political vacuum." The government should take this into consideration, he said.

Only one of the six assailants has been identified by police to date. He was named as Medhat Abdel-Rahman, who hails from the town of El-Badari in the southern province of Assiut, was briefly detained in 1993 and later departed to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Mona El-Nahhas, who travelled to El-Badari to meet with his parents, was told that they had not heard from him since his disappearance four years ago.

The parents said the Islamists managed to win Medhat over to their side by offering him a job, selling *hul* and *taamiya* sandwiches for LE3 a day.

Yesterday, about 1,000 tour guides gathered outside the Hatshepsut Temple, the site of the slaughter, to mourn one of their colleagues, Adel Hammad, who was killed in the massacre.

Men and women, dressed in black, carried bouquets of white roses, carnations and gladioli. Muslim prayers were offered and a Christian mass was held at the temple for the rest of the victims.

"Message from Thebes," another funerary ceremony at the temple, is planned by the Ministry of Culture for 10 December. "It will be a symbolic gesture on the part of all Egyptians... and [a sign that] we will not give in to terrorism," Culture Minister Farouk Hosni told the *Weekly*.

The government, attempting to revive the tourism industry, which was dealt a crippling blow by the massacre, is acting to encourage domestic tourism. EgyptAir was ordered by Ganzouri to slash the fares of its domestic flights by 50 per cent.

(see p.3)

BORN TO PERFORM.



JUST LIKE A PARKER.

✦ PARKER SONNET

The PARKER SONNET Coated has a beautifully engraved sliding silver-tone metal exterior, enriched by heavy 22k gold plated trim. The fountain pen's performance is enhanced by a precisely engineered ink flow system designed to give a smooth and uninterrupted flow to your writing. A pen which comes from a long line of famous performers. Like all new PARKER writing instruments it has a lifetime guarantee.

* this guarantee does not affect your statutory rights.

INSIDE



Ibrahim Nafie:
Battling on
many fronts

8



Eqbal Ahmad:
Democracy,
Indian style

5



Khairiya
El-Bishlawi:
Absence
at the heart

11

Available in all stationery & gift shops in Egypt.

M. KHOUBA P.O. BOX 1057, CAIRO 11511. TEL: 3802090/4180034/4180035 FAX: 4182653

Austria calls for concrete Israeli measures

During a visit to Cairo on Sunday, Austrian Chancellor Klima told Neveine Khalil that Prime Minister Netanyahu should deliver on agreements already signed with the Palestinians



Klima with Mubarak on Sunday

Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima, making a regional tour, visited Cairo on Sunday and met with President Hosni Mubarak, as well as other high officials, to review the state of Middle East peacekeeping. Both Mubarak and Klima agreed that the ball was in Israel's court and that it was up to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to show his commitment to peace.

"It is important that Israel now takes concrete measures to continue the peace process, based on the Oslo, Hebron and interim agreements," Klima told Al-Ahram Weekly. He suggested that the world community take a firm stand by "expressing very clearly and strongly what we expect from Israel."

The Chancellor said Austria wished to improve the economic conditions of Palestinians in the self-rule areas, where unemployment has soared to 60 per cent. "High unemployment rates, especially among young people, [nurture] extremism," Klima said, adding that in cooperation with the European Union (EU), a "specific infrastructure programme for Palestine" could be drawn up.

European countries, however, expressing dissatisfaction with the role of financier, want to play a broader political role. Klima agrees

that the EU should have a political role but this should be a "supportive role to be coordinated and developed" with the United States, the main peace broker in the region. "It should not be in competition, because this would make no sense."

Klima believes that coordination between the EU and the US would make Israel understand that the world community "expects concrete steps now."

The Chancellor, who met earlier with Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, said that launching final status negotiations must go hand-in-hand with the implementation of signed agreements. "Fast track negotiations over final status issues are only possible if they run parallel to delivery of the existing agreements," he said.

In his talks with Mubarak, Klima also discussed the current tourist scare that followed the 17 November massacre in Luxor. Mubarak explained the "measures taken by the government to improve the quality of control and protection of tourists in this country," said Klima. He conceded that Austrians have become "more cautious" about travelling to Egypt, but stressed the necessity of publicising the government's new security measures.

Klima believes that a global effort should be made to combat terrorism, suggesting "an international platform fighting organised crime and criminals like terrorists."

The Chancellor added, however, that signing an

extradition treaty with Egypt would not necessarily serve such a cause. He said extradition requests must be considered "case by case" so as not to infringe on the right to political asylum.

"It is important to draw a distinction between the right of asylum for political refugees and criminal activities," he said, adding that "precise documentation" of criminal activities would have to be provided before his government would agree to hand over a political refugee.

Klima's talks with Egyptian officials also covered bilateral relations as well as Egypt-EU ties. Bilateral trade between Egypt and Austria averages a meagre \$150 million annually; but Klima believes this volume can be increased. "For us, Egypt could be a gateway to the African markets," he said, "and for Egypt, Austria can be a gateway to the EU markets and central and east European countries."

During the visit, private sector representatives from the two countries met together to explore means of cooperation. "We could increase cooperation in infrastructure, energy and transport sectors as well as urban technologies," Klima said.

Easing the Cairo-Doha strain

Saudi Arabia is reportedly attempting to mediate in order to defuse the tension in Egyptian-Qatari relations

A visit by a Saudi envoy to Cairo on Tuesday has triggered speculation that a mediation effort is being made by Riyadh to try and halt the decay in Egyptian-Qatari relations, reports Dina Ezzat. Barely hours after Abdel-Aziz Al-Khateib, a Saudi state minister, met with President Hosni Mubarak, Foreign Minister Amr Moussa boarded a plane to Saudi Arabia, for an evening of talks, accompanied by presidential adviser Osama El-Baz.

Al-Khateib delivered a message from King Fahd to Mubarak but declined to divulge its contents. When asked about the strain in Egyptian-Qatari relations, the Saudi official responded: "As an Arab citizen, I believe that an understanding between the two countries would be of benefit to the whole Arab world."

Al-Khateib's visit to Cairo and Moussa's departure for Riyadh came at a time when Egyptian officials were saying that a quarrel with Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem did not mean that Egypt and Qatar have themselves fallen out. "The man has made a mistake and we will deal with him," Moussa said earlier. "As far as Egypt and Qatar are concerned, that is another issue. I want to draw a distinction between Qatari relations [with Egypt] and what has been said by the Qatari foreign minister."

Moussa affirmed that the problem should be addressed "calmly". Egyptian foreign policy has been working hard to encourage good inter-Arab relations and these efforts should not be wasted simply "because someone chose to forget their manners and insulted Egypt, its president and people, using language that he should not have used," he said.

Moussa was referring to comments made by Bin Jassem last month, accusing Egypt of "lying" and "insulting" Qatar and "changing its coat regularly." At the root of the quarrel was the Egyptian decision to boycott the fourth Middle East/North Africa conference for regional economic cooperation that was held in the Qatari capital on 16-18 November. A war of words raged between newspapers in the two countries, with the Qatari press accusing Egypt of backing a failed 1996 coup against the emir and successfully lobbying Arab states to boycott the Doha conference. Egypt denied the accusations and briefly recalled its ambassador to Doha, Mohamed El-Menissi, in protest.

When El-Menissi went back to Doha, he was hoping that the problem "would be contained for the sake of the good relations that should bind all Arab countries together." But nevertheless the war of words raged on, unchecked.

For Moussa, "the insults hurled by the foreign minister do not represent the feelings of the Qatari people. Relations between the Egyptian and Qatari peoples are too strong and too deep to be affected by such insults and the atypical attitude of one individual, even if he is the foreign minister."

Speaking to Al-Ahram Weekly from his office in Doha, El-Menissi said both Egypt and Qatar do seem willing to work at improving relations. "This week, I met with Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed El-Mahmoud, and we exchanged views about the current problem. It was clear from this meeting that the Qatari side is keen to overcome the crisis."

Al-Sharq Al-Awsat suit dropped

President Mubarak's two sons have agreed to drop the libel suit they had brought against a London-based Saudi newspaper which, in turn, has decided to reopen its Cairo office. Khaled Dawoud reports



Gamal Mubarak (left) accepting the apologies of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat's publishers during a meeting this week

An out-of-court settlement has been reached between the two sons of President Hosni Mubarak, Alaa and Gamal, and the publishers of the London-based Saudi newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat. According to Ragia Attiya, the Mubaraks' lawyer, the deal was worked out at a meeting on Monday night that brought together the two sons with publishers Hesham and Mohamed Ali Hafez and the newspaper's chief editor, Othman Al-Omayyeh.

The three Saudi nationals, along with two London-based Egyptian journalists, were sentenced in absentia two months ago to one year's imprisonment by a first instance court after they were convicted of libel. Sayed Abdel-Adi, a journalist with the opposition newspaper Al-Wafd who used to contribute

articles to Al-Sharq Al-Awsat was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

The six appealed the sentences and the first session of the appeal trial opened last month. Attiya said the out-of-court settlement had been expressly agreed upon before 10 December, the date of the second session of the appeal trial. Under the settlement, Attiya will inform the court that his clients have dropped the libel charges and that a settlement had been reached. Mubarak's sons had filed the lawsuit in May.

According to a statement released by the two sides after Monday's meeting, the publishers "offered their profound apologies for the gross mistake made by the newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and the magazine Al-Jadida, after the

first published an advertisement and the second an article, which did extreme and unjustifiable harm to Alaa and Gamal Mubarak, by attributing to them actions which have no basis in truth but are mere malicious and false rumours and fabrications."

The statement described the meeting between the Mubaraks and the publishers as cordial and paid tribute to the warm and close relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The newspaper also agreed to reopen its Cairo office, where more than 100 Egyptians were employed. The publishers had decided to close down the office after the sentences were handed down by the first degree court.

A day before the meeting with the publishers, Alaa and Gamal Mubarak

met with the two Egyptian London-based journalists, Fawziya Salama and Gamal Ismail, who lost their jobs because Al-Sharq Al-Awsat held them responsible for the appearance of the allegations. The statement noted that "although Alaa and Gamal Mubarak are convinced that the pair [Ismail and Salama] were directly or indirectly responsible for the mistake, they should be able to get their jobs back."

According to the statement, the publishers on behalf of the staff of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Al-Jadida affirmed "their profound respect to Alaa and

Gamal Mubarak and their sorrow for the mistake made by the two publications when they published this inaccurate information involuntarily. They also affirmed the great respect which the staff of the two publications have for the leading role played by the Arab Republic of Egypt under the wise leadership of President Hosni Mubarak."

Israeli plan leaves Cairo cold

Egypt has thrown its weight behind the Palestinians who turned down Israeli proposals that would cost them more while giving them less. Dina Ezzat reports

It has been a busy week at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Middle East peace-making the focus of several meetings with both Israeli and Palestinian visitors. Under discussion was a proposal by the Israeli government to carry out a very limited redeployment, the scope of which is yet to be determined, in the West Bank. In return, the Palestinians would drop their demand for a larger redeployment, sanctioned by the Oslo Accords, jump-start the final status negotiations and wage a relentless war against Islamist militants.

Taking into account Egypt's role as a regional peace-broker, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent Eitan Ben-Tsur, general-secretary of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and his political adviser Danny Naveth, to Cairo. Ben-Tsur met with Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, while Naveth held talks with presidential adviser Osama El-Baz.

Also visiting Cairo for the same purpose was Nabil Shaath, minister of planning in the Palestinian National Authority.

Judging by the statements made by Egyptian and Palestinian officials, neither side is happy with the

Israeli proposal. And neither side is expecting much to come out of two Israeli committees which were authorised by the Israeli cabinet to decide the scope of the redeployment and the Palestinian obligations that should go with it.

The general impression is that the Israeli proposal will fail to make a breakthrough in the eight-month-old stalemate but may also cause additional complications. The reason is that new maps will have to be prepared for the proposed redeployment, which is bound to open the door for endless disputes between both sides.

The Israeli proposal "is too general and has too many ambiguities," said Foreign Minister Moussa following his meeting with Ben-Tsur. But the Israeli diplomat described it as "viable" and a "way to enable [the parties] to get the [peace] process going for the final status talks."

Both Moussa and Shaath said the proposal, as it stood, fell short of meeting the Palestinian right to regain more West Bank land and to other self-rule prerogatives stipulated in the Oslo agreements.

"Talking about redeployment should mean the

implementation of contractual deals and showing respect in dealing with the Palestinians, and not just giving them something so that they [the Israelis] can get out of the current crisis," said Moussa.

An earlier Israeli proposal to redeploy from between six and eight per cent of the West Bank's area was rejected by both the Palestinians and Egypt.

"According to the Oslo accords," Shaath said, "we should get 90 per cent of our land before we go to the final status talks, where we would negotiate the remaining 10 per cent, including Jerusalem and the settlements. So far, we have less than 30 per cent of this land."

Shaath said the scope of a second redeployment, under the Oslo Accords, should not be less than 24 per cent of the West Bank area and should be followed by a third withdrawal, that would bring 90 per cent of the West Bank under Palestinian self-rule. He also noted that other Israeli commitments under the interim accords, such as the opening of an airport and a harbour in Gaza, remain

unfulfilled.

Now that the Palestinians have turned down the Israeli proposal, Egypt is expected to urge the United States to ask Netanyahu to modify its terms to make it as compatible as possible with the provisions of Oslo. Washington had already put pressure on the Israeli prime minister to come up with the proposal.

In the meantime, Egypt and France are considering a joint initiative that could serve as a back-up for America's "time-out" scheme, under which Netanyahu was supposed to slow down settlement building and carry out a second redeployment.

Unlike the latest Israeli proposal, the Egyptian-French initiative is unlikely to link a second redeployment to the opening of the final status negotiations. The reason is that both Cairo and Paris have little faith in Netanyahu's readiness to honour his contractual obligations.

The framework of the joint initiative was

'Big numbers, high calibre'

Undeterred by the Luxor atrocity, the largest gathering of media people and advertisers will go ahead as scheduled in Cairo next May

Members of the Middle East and Africa chapters of the International Advertising Association (IAA) said they were determined to hold the 36th IAA Congress in Cairo as arranged from 10 to 13 May 1998, reports Neveine Khalil. Speaking to the press on Saturday, after a meeting to assess the impact of the terrorist attack in Luxor on their plans, organisers decided to forge ahead. The conference will be held under the auspices of President Hosni Mubarak.

"One has to allow time for the wounds to heal, but we are looking to

the future, and the future says that Egypt is the place where the conference will be held," said Jean-Claude Boulos, IAA vice-president and Middle East Africa area director. "We are not going to change anything to do with this."

Boulos added that terrorist attacks could happen anywhere and at any time, and that by the beginning of next year foreigners will have overcome the shock and return to Egypt. "People will forget and they will come," he said.

Talal Dhulaymi, IAA corporate membership regional director, stressed that Egypt has the backing of the whole region in hosting the conference. "All present are unaffected by what was said about [cancelling] the congress," Dhulaymi said. "Our position remains the same and our support for the Egyptian chapter is steadfast." He added that the success of the Cairo congress is a priority for all Arab delegates, who will "exert their utmost efforts to promote this event."

Nabil Osman, director of the State Information Service, said that Egypt has "very extensive experience of organising international

and regional conferences", and that the Luxor attack had to be put in "the right context", pointing out that there were terrorist attacks in the US, Japan and Europe. "Luxor was the result of a certain security failure, which has been addressed through new security measures that everyone is aware of," said Osman. "This sorry event in Luxor should not affect the overall image of Egypt, which is characterised by hospitality and compassion."

The IAA, the only global partnership bringing together media, agencies, advertisers and market communications professionals, will be holding their 36th congress under the title "Interaction: The 21st century". The gathering takes place every two years, but this is the first time it has come to the region. It will also be the last congress this century and will coincide with the IAA's 60th anniversary. Organisers aim to draw the greatest number of participants yet, hopefully as many as 2,000, but it is still unclear how successful they will be.

Mustafa As'ad, former IAA world president, said that it was "very difficult" to provide an estimate of participant numbers until one month before the event. "According to our experience, 40 per cent usually register only 2-3 months before," he said. "Our forecast [of 2,000 participants] is based on previous conferences, responses from our friends, and the positive vibrations we are feeling."

"Egypt has it all" said As'ad, "and everyone of us will be playing the role of ambassador for this congress." A "huge" delegation is expected from Britain, which will host the congress in the year 2000, as well as "big, big, big numbers and calibre" from the Arab world, according to As'ad. He added

that within the next six months, "personal contacts, experience and previous achievements will convince delegates to come."

According to Galal Zaki, secretary-general of the 36th IAA Congress, delegates from the region are assisting in promoting the conference to the world. "We have great aspirations for Egypt and hopefully our partners in the region will support our drive," noted Zaki, adding that half of the participants at the Cairo congress will be from the region. He also expects that only one-fifth of the delegates will be IAA members, while the rest will be mega high-tech and media companies, as has previously been the case.

Boulos said it was the "responsibility of all the Arabs" to make the Cairo gathering "the most successful [IAA] conference of the 20th century." He added that ongoing contacts aim to ensure that "the best people come to the conference [which] brings together the top marketing people in the fields of advertising and media."

A special session will focus on various developments in the fields of interactive communications, marketing, research and advertising in the Middle East and Africa. Another will showcase interaction past, present and future, and on the last day, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak will preside over a session dedicated to children under the age of 5, entitled "Project of Hope."

Hassan Hamdi, chairman of the organising committee, said that the patronage of both President Mubarak and Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak will give the conference a "boost". Hamdi added that the sponsorship of sports events, a multi-billion dollar business, will be one new topic to be discussed in Cairo. "Sponsorship can make or break a sports event and is a

major source of funding," noted Hamdi, a former football star.

Alongside the different sessions, in which former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali will be a guest speaker, congress activities will include an exhibition of the latest high-tech innovations, gala dinners and excursions. Interactive sessions promise to bring people from different parts of the world together, via satellite video conferencing and the Internet. Information kiosks will allow visitors to access information about Egypt and special events while staying in touch with their offices back home.

The Congress's chairwoman Loula Zaklamsa said that the organisers have launched an active marketing campaign for the conference, which began during the Egyptian night at the end of the 1996 Korea gathering. "President Mubarak invited delegates via a video wall address to attend next year's Cairo meeting," she said. Since then, the 36th congress has been promoted in numerous forums, as well as by the Cairo congress's roaming ambassador in Europe, Abdel-Aziz Faiz.

The National Company for Building and Construction

announces

that its shares in the Mahmoudiya General Company for Contracting and Real Estate Investment have been registered in the central deposit system of Misr for Clearing and Central Deposit Company as of 26/11/1997.

An English Language School

REQUIRES

Qualified/experienced native English-speaking teachers to teach children aged 5-8 years.

Please contact our receptionist

9am - 3pm Saturday - Thursday

5863149-5814779-5815118

CLASS ADS

FOR SALE

Special, rare, first-class stamp collection. Middle East and others. For appointment, telephone Mr. M. Talaat at 4152018

FOR RENT

A furnished apartment overlooking the Nile, Maadi, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, telephone, air-conditioning, 12th floor, panoramic view of the Pyramids and the Nile. Contact: 2407163 after 4.00pm.

FOR RENT OR SALE

We have all kinds of flats and cars for rent or sale. Dealers, tel. 2729889

Acting on their own?

Following the Luxor massacre many questions have been asked. Did the assailants act on their own? Is the government ready to negotiate? Khaled Dawoud sought some answers

Statements issued by Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya this week appear to be aimed at creating the impression that the Luxor massacre has caused a division within the ranks of the militant group. Although the group claimed responsibility for the brutal killing of 58 foreign tourists and four Egyptians on 17 November, expatriate members and so-called "moderate" elements at home are now circulating the theory that the assailants acted on their own without orders from their leadership.

Montasser El-Zayat, an Islamist lawyer who was detained for seven months in 1995 for allegedly acting as the Gama'a's spokesman, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that he had serious doubts that the six militants who were killed after carrying out the massacre consulted their leadership in advance.

He claimed that they were victims of the government's suppression of militants in southern Egypt over the past five years, and that they acted out of desperation.

Al-Morabitoun, a magazine published by the Gama'a abroad, also printed an article whose writer said that he clearly disagreed with what took place in Luxor. According to Gama'a sources, the writer is Osama Rashed, a second-generation Gama'a leader who is believed to be living in Holland. He is one of 14 Gama'a members living abroad whose extradition is sought by the government.

The article, titled "The Luxor incident and the policy of the blocked road," read: "Honesty and courage call upon me to announce my deep sorrow and sadness for what happened in Luxor, and for the death of a large number of innocent victims who have nothing to do with the on-going conflict between the Egyptian regime and the Islamic current, led by Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya."

The writer urged members of the group to exercise "self-restraint" because "winning a battle is not important if we stand to lose ourselves, and the goal that we have been fighting for." The writer added that despite the grievances group members might have against the government, "it is not possible, and it is not religiously accepted, that we reciprocate injustice with a similar injustice or even a greater injustice."

He claimed that a statement which was found on one of the attackers af-

ter he was shot dead indicated that "those brothers acted on their own." In the statement to which he alluded, the assailants apologised to their leaders for the failure of their first mission and indicated that they staged the Luxor attack instead.

Meanwhile, and despite President Hosni Mubarak's declared opposition to any "dialogue with terrorist groups", reports on contacts and mediation efforts between the government and militants continued to circulate. One of the expatriate Gama'a leaders, Yasser Serri, told Arab newspapers and international news agencies that a "semi-official" Egyptian delegate contacted him to negotiate terms for a dialogue. Serri was sentenced to death in absentia in 1994 for his role in the assassination attempt against the then Prime Minister Atef Sedki.

But both Islamist figures and security sources denied Serri's claim. "Serri only represents himself. He is seeking media attention by circulating such reports," said one Islamist source.

A security source who spoke to the *Weekly* on condition of anonymity agreed. "Serri is nothing but a fax machine, sending out statements which do not reflect anyone's position except his own," said the source. Since he managed to escape to London, Serri has been running the "Islamic Monitoring Centre" which reports on alleged violations of human rights of militants all over the Arab world.

The security source also brushed aside the reports on mediation efforts between the Gama'a and the government. "If we were seeking to negotiate, why would Egypt make a fuss with countries like Britain in order to gain the extradition of the terrorists living there?" The source added that the mediation reports were circulated by the Islamists themselves "in order to ease the pressure they are now coming under in the European countries where they live. They want to tell those governments: wait, maybe we can reach a solution."

The security source said that one problem which would face the government if it decided to take the "dialogue" offer seriously would be the fragmentation of the Gama'a and its expatriate leadership. "We do not know whom to talk to. Even Sheikh

Omar Abdel-Rahman [now serving a life term in New York after he was convicted in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing] has no control over the group," the source said. Moreover, assuming that the government managed to reach a deal with the Gama'a, "what about the Jihad and other groups? Would they accept what we agree, or would they start making their own conditions as well?" the source asked.

Security sources and other analysts also excluded the possibility that the Luxor assailants acted on their own. They said that the timing of the attack, and the professional way in which it was carried out, leave no doubt that this was a well-planned operation that required advance preparations. "We have to be stupid to believe that this was an operation carried out by a group of young men without orders from their expatriate leadership," said one security source.

So, what does the future hold? The Gama'a militants, on the one hand, are expected to intensify their efforts to convince the government to sit down with them and negotiate their demands, mainly the release of prisoners and a halt of military trials that usually end with death sentences for the militants. In this respect, the six so-called "historic" Gama'a leaders who made an appeal from behind bars to their followers in July to stop anti-government violence were expected to affirm their cease-fire call.

The government, on the other hand, is reportedly working on a new security plan in which all options will remain open, including a major "search and arrest" campaign against militant suspects in Upper Egypt, informed sources told the *Weekly*.

The Gama'a, in a statement issued last Thursday, called upon the army not to take part with the police in cracking down on the group. The statement added that the intervention of the army "would not solve a problem, and would only make matters worse."

The Islamist lawyer, Zayat, told the *Weekly* that he expected "worse things to happen if the situation continues as it is right now. There has to be a solution, and security measures alone over the past five years did not bring about any results. So, there has to be a dialogue."



Abdel-Rahman's parents despair over their son's fate

photo: Magdi Abdel-Sayed

Portrait of the terrorist as a young man

Medhat Abdel-Rahman, one of the six Luxor assailants, condemned his own parents as unbelievers and smashed their television set, which he considered to be an un-Islamic device, shortly before his sudden disappearance in 1993. According to the parents, Medhat fell into the militants' trap after they gave him a menial job, selling *fuul* and *taamiya* sandwiches for LE3 a day. He began growing a beard.

Medhat was the only attacker whose body could be identified by police. The identities of the other five remain a mystery, raising the spectre of a nightmare scenario in which a new generation of militants, with no police records, might have emerged on the scene.

Medhat hails from El-Badari, a town in the governorate of Assiut, surrounded by sugar-cane fields, about 420km south of Cairo. It was once a hotbed for militants, before police gained the upper hand.

According to an Interior Ministry statement, Medhat was arrested for two months in 1993 for attacking police guards in the southern governorate of Qena. Following his release, he departed for Pakistan and Afghanistan, where he received military training and became involved with leaders of Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya.

The people of El-Badari were reluctant at first to give *Al-Ahram Weekly*'s reporter and photographer to the Abdel-Rahmans' residence. A Coptic volunteer quickly disappeared after he pointed at a small room, which looked more like a cottage, located at the end of a dirt road on agricultural land.

Inside, Medhat's parents told the *Weekly* that when they read their son's name in the newspapers, following the Luxor attack, it was the first time they had received news of him since he left home four years earlier.

"What happened was a terrible shock to us," the father, Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, said morosely. The mother,

Medhat Abdel-Rahman, the only Luxor assailant whose body has been identified, began his career with the Gama'a Al-Islamiya selling *fuul* and *taamiya*. Mona El-Nahhas pays a visit to El-Badari

Saadeya Abdel-Qader, added: "We did not believe that our son could commit such a savage crime."

The two sat on boxes made of palm-tree fronds, placed next to each other to serve as a sofa, inside the small mudbrick room, which was dimly-lit by a gas lamp. The roof over their heads was made of hay.

"It was only when we received the corpse that we really believed that he had done it," said the mother, who was dressed in simple black clothes and a black head-cover. "We buried the corpse and grieved, but we also thanked God for everything."

The father, wearing a brown *galabiyah* and covering his shoulders with a shawl, recounted how his son had turned militant.

Medhat, the father said, completed his military service in 1990 after taking a high-school degree in agriculture. Failing to find a job, he was easy prey for the militants, who offered to help him out. They found him a job, selling *fuul* and *taamiya* sandwiches for LE3 a day.

Shortly afterwards, he grew a long beard and stopped watching television, a habit which the militants consider sinful. He later smashed the family television set, to prevent other members of his family from watching it.

"I was astonished by this bizarre behaviour, but at first I failed to understand the reason behind the change in his character," the father said. "Once I realised what was going on, I advised him to break with these men [the militants] and

return to his senses, but he turned a deaf ear to all my pleas."

The father said that he went as far as to threaten to divorce the mother, as a means of putting pressure on the son, but to no avail.

"His brothers, Mohamed and Ahmed, stood firmly against him, but he flew into a rage and described all of us as unbelievers," the mother said. "And then he left the house in 1993, accompanied by a group of bearded men. He never came back and we never heard from him. We lost all hope of ever tracking him down."

The parents expressed their hope that police would now release Medhat's two brothers, who have been detained in the nearby city of Assiut for the past two and a half years. "They have nothing to do with terrorism and they were always opposed to their brother's wrongdoings. Officials at the Assiut security department had previously told us they would be released only if we informed them of Medhat's hideout. How could we know?" the father said.

Now that Medhat is dead, his family have breathed a sigh of relief, believing his death will bring their troubles to an end. "The police used to raid our house twice a month and they arrested me more than once to get information on him," the father said. "I had to stop working because of all these problems and things were just going from bad to worse. How could I support my family when I had no job?"

His voice trembling, the father continued: "I did nothing wrong. I fought in the 1973 war and I know the true meaning of patriotism. It's unfair that I should have to bear the consequences of my son's criminal acts."

The mother added: "Medhat has destroyed our lives. Now we scrape a living on our small piece of land. It's the only thing we have left. Our relatives and neighbours have abandoned us, because they didn't want to get involved."

Fact-finding MPs underline Luxor lessons

A parliamentary fact-finding committee wants the socio-economic roots of militant violence to be addressed. Gamal Essam El-Din reports

More than 20 members of the People's Assembly and Shura Council paid a 24-hour visit to Luxor last week. There they came to the conclusion, which so many people have reached before, that victory in the war against terrorism requires much more than a police confrontation. The committee's report also confirmed that the massacre has dealt a crushing blow to the city's once-thriving tourism industry, which is now facing a grim future unless urgent counter-measures can be taken.

During the visit, the parliamentarians held a meeting at Luxor's Conference Hall with a large number of hoteliers, bazaar shop owners and souvenir manufacturers as well as with the city's new security chief, Maj. Gen. Mohamed Saad Abdel-Nour.

Salah El-Taroui, chairman of the Assembly's Information, Tourism and Culture Committee, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that in their report the parliamentarians concluded that addressing the violence problem strictly from a security perspective was not enough. Although he expressed

the belief that there were "foreign hands" behind the massacre, El-Taroui said: "The fact remains that Islamist violence is largely due to deep-rooted socio-economic problems. It is true that in the last few years the government has made greater budgetary allocations to the development of Upper Egypt, but the massacre showed again that militant violence still feeds on widespread poverty, unemployment and [people's] humiliation [at the hands of the police forces]," El-Taroui added.

He complained that in the past the government had not listened to parliament's recommendations. In November 1992, the Assembly's Culture and Tourism Committee made as many as 20 recommendations on the necessity of providing tourist and archaeological sites with greater protection by providing helicopters and anti-terrorist squads. According to El-Taroui, the committee had also recommended dividing Luxor into four administrative sectors and establishing a well-equipped police station on the western bank of the Nile.

The report prepared by the parliamentarians quoted Abul-Nour as saying the archaeological area on the western bank is vast and of a mountainous nature, and will require a new plan for police deployment and the establishment of checkpoints. Abul-Nour also told the visitors that the armed forces will take on responsibility for the security of the archaeological area and the hills surrounding it, using sophisticated night-vision equipment to detect any militant infiltrators.

The message the locals conveyed to the visitors is that the lives of thousands of them will be affected, now that the city has been abandoned by tourists. Bazaar owners and souvenir manufacturers said they will no longer be able to pay the rents of their shops. "These shops employ 80 per cent of Luxor's young men and are their main source of livelihood," the report said.

Yehia Shalman, who represents Luxor in the Assembly, said that he had tried for two years as MP to convey to top government officials the

administrative and security problems of Luxor, but without any concrete results. He added: "The Luxor city council meets in Cairo and is headed by a Cairene who does not have a good grounding in the city's real problems. It is not even clear whether the city is still affiliated to the Qena Governorate or is administratively independent."

Mustafa Haggag, a former chairman of the Luxor city council, said the city's inhabitants had to speak out and vent their grievances, following President Hosni Mubarak's condemnation of previous security policies. "The inhabitants are treated as eighth class citizens [by the police]," Haggag said. According to the report, the humiliation of citizens at the hands of police in Upper Egypt was particularly evident in Luxor.

Abdel-Rehim El-Ghoul, chairman of the Assembly's Sports and Youth Committee, urged the city's new security chief to introduce a new and more "humane" approach.

Following the Luxor visit, the Shura Council's

Tourism Committee held a meeting to review the impact of the massacre on the tourism industry. The obvious conclusion was that the industry, which nets around \$3 billion annually and is the main source of income for about 1 million families, is bound to suffer greatly. Abdel-Salam Abdel-Ghaffar, the committee's chairman, said that occupancy rates in Luxor hotels have plummeted from 90 to around 10 percent. The committee recommended that the bank debts of hotel owners should be rescheduled.

Salah Montasser, a committee member and a senior columnist at *Al-Ahram* said that 10 telephone lines which were installed near Hatshepsut's Temple at the time the opera *Aida* was performed in October had been removed once the performances had come to an end. "Archaeology officials asked the Telecommunications Authority to keep the lines in place" but their request was turned down, said Montasser. "This means that the archaeological area was isolated from the whole world at the time the massacre took place," Montasser said.

Lisez

- L'Intifada a dix ans
La colère grande encore.
- John Garang au Caire
Nous luttons pour l'unité du Soudan.
- Enseignement
Les prémices d'une réforme.
- Gamaa Islamiya
Un mouvement pygmalien.
- Investissements en Egypte
Les bonnes intentions du patronat français.

□ Le réalisateur polonais Zanussi
Filmer pour inventer l'avenir.

Rédacteur en Chef
Exécutif
Mohamed Salmawy

Président
et Rédacteur en Chef
Ibrahim Nafie

Tears of anger at Luxor

The Ministry of Culture is organising a roses-and-candles ceremony at the Hatshepsut Temple next week to pay tribute to the massacre victims, reports Omayma Abdel-Latif

In the 7th century BC, the ancient city of Thebes, now known as Luxor, was invaded by the Assyrians, who plundered its treasures and then razed it to the ground. "Her strength was infinite," wrote one historian at the time, "yet she was carried away into captivity."

On 17 November, Luxor was again taken captive by terrorism. As a result of the carnage at the Hatshepsut Temple, the city, which includes some of the world's greatest monuments, has been abandoned by tourists.

In a message to the world expressing the city's anguish at what happened and its determination not to give in to terrorism, the Ministry of Culture is organising a "funeral ceremony" at the Hatshepsut Temple on 10 December to pay tribute to the fallen victims.

"It will be a symbolic gesture on the part of all Egyptians, conveying to the families of those who lost their lives on our land the sorrow we feel at what has happened and our refusal to capitulate before terrorism," Culture Minister Farouk Hosni told *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

The move appears to have been organised in response to the panic which swept through sections of the Western media following the tragedy.

"Through this tribute, we are telling the Western press and media that their hysterical reaction will only add to the misery and anguish," Hosni said.

Echoing these sentiments, Samir Gharib, head of the ministry's cultural development fund, said the ceremony was intended to show the world that Luxor does not deserve to be ostracised.

"Now people [in the West] believe that there is a bomb in every restaurant and a grenade in every temple. This hysteria is playing into the hands of the terrorists," Gharib said.

This is why the ceremony, which has been called "Message from Thebes," is being organised and will be broadcast to the world by satellite television.

Hosni, urging "all Egypt's lovers to flock back to Luxor," said: "The place is no more or less dangerous than it was two weeks ago. We call upon all tourists not to join this boycott of Egypt, because it means that they are in effect joining the terrorists in their heinous campaign."

A "martyrs' anthem" will be played at the opening of the ceremony and will be followed by a short speech which will be made by an undisclosed "world-famous personality." The speech will convey condolences to the families of the victims and also a message of defiance to terrorism, Gharib said.

Verdi's *Tears of Anger* will be played, to express Egyptians' condemnation of the massacre. The audience will then light candles to commemorate the victims, and place roses at the scene of the slaughter.

Hosni said that he, and all other officials taking part, will be there simply in their capacity as ordinary citizens.

The idea of the ceremony was first floated by columnists in the Arabic-language press, who suggested that an event should be organised to express the people's outrage. "We need to rise above the atrocity. This cannot be achieved by ignoring it, but only by acting so as to wipe out its consequences," one columnist wrote.

Tourist guides, whose very livelihood has been threatened by the mass exodus of tourists, organised a memorial service at the temple yesterday, at which representatives of Sheikh Mohamed Sayed Tantawi of Al-Azhar Mosque and Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Orthodox Church attended.

Edited by Wadie Kirolos



Palestinians throwing stones at Israeli soldiers during demonstrations that erupted in the West Bank earlier this week calling for the release of Palestinian prisoners

photo: Khaled Zighari

West Bank erupts in anger

The plight of Palestinian prisoner Itaf Elyan ended in compromise after a tense and bloody week during which demonstrations, sit-ins and sporadic clashes with Israeli soldiers took place. **Khaled Amayreh** reports from Jerusalem

Violent demonstrations broke out all over the West Bank this week in which protesters, throwing stones and petrol bombs, clashed with Israeli army soldiers in scenes reminiscent of the Palestinian uprising, or Intifada. Israeli soldiers responded by firing rounds of live ammunition and rubber bullets at the protesters.

The impetus behind the recent clashes was the abduction and continued detention by the Israeli authorities of Islamic Jihad activist Itaf Elyan, who, ever since her arrest on 21 October had been on hunger strike, vowing to continue until either "freedom or martyrdom." However, the underlying causes of Palestinian indignation and exasperation was the enduring plight of Palestinian political prisoners in Israel including an estimated 800 so-called administrative detainees, who are interned as virtual hostages pending an improvement in the political climate and the security situation. Administrative detainees, like Elyan, are neither charged nor tried, and their terms of detention (usually six months) can be renewed indefinitely, occasionally to six years.

Elyan, who had been released from Israeli detention early this year after serving a 10-year prison sentence for "endangering the security of the state," was arrested in circumstances amounting to an abduction rather than a formal arrest. Elyan was travelling from Bethlehem, her home town, to Birzeit University reportedly to attend a memorial marking the second anniversary of the assassination by Mossad agents of former Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shekaki in Malta.

A routine Israeli army roadblock erected on the rugged Wadi Al-Nar (an extremely dangerous bypass road opened by the Israeli army five years ago as an alternative travel route to the historical Hebron-Jerusalem highway) stopped the car in which Elyan was travelling. The soldiers manning the roadblocks took the identity cards of the passengers to make the usual security checks. Un-

fortunately, Elyan's identity card still carries the label "ex-prisoner, dangerous person". The soldiers, acting rather like pirates, forced her out of the car, handcuffed her, and took her to a detention lock-up. Forty-eight hours later, she was served "a three-month administrative detention."

Elyan couldn't take it anymore. She felt that the Israelis were determined to break her and probably bully her into leaving the country altogether, and it was in response to this treatment that she decided to challenge the Israeli state rather than "accept the things we can't change."

Upon arrival at the Ramle lockup, she went on hunger strike, demanding that she either be put on trial or be released. The Israeli prison authorities told Elyan her demands were "wishful thinking." Reports of Elyan's hunger strike and rumours that her health was deteriorating rapidly raised tensions, which erupted in demonstrations and rallies, first at West Bank colleges and later on the streets. At Bethlehem University, Islamic Jihad supporters warned that "if anything happened to sister Elyan, we would carry out a martyrdom operation in the heart of Tel Aviv."

Two days earlier on 18 November, Israeli soldiers guarding Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who was participating in a religious celebration at 'Rachel's Tomb' in Bethlehem, shot and killed 8-year-old Ali Al-Jawarish, a Palestinian first grader, while returning from school. According to eye-witnesses, Al-Jawarish was waving his hand to the IDF sniper thinking the soldier was going to photograph him. The soldier shot him in the head. Five days later, he was pronounced "clinically dead."

The protests continued, gathering even more momentum after the funeral of Al-Jawarish. The situation deteriorated further on 22 November, when Israeli soldiers manning the roadblock north of Bethlehem shot dead Jimmy Kanawari, son of a prominent local

Christian family, allegedly because he "refused to heed orders to stop."

On Friday, Elyan smuggled a letter from her hospital bed at Ramle Prison, urging the Palestinians not to let her down.

She pointed out that "while as a religious Muslim, I abhor suicide, there is no other means available to me to protest my unlawful detention. I will continue my fast until freedom or martyrdom."

Elyan's letter, which was published in all major Arabic dailies, fueled the anger of Palestinians, already seething at a peace process that has been transformed into a farce.

On Saturday, widespread demonstrations and protests were held throughout the West Bank from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the South. The most violent of them took place, not surprisingly, in Bethlehem, where as many as 40 Palestinians were injured when Israeli soldiers opened fire using rubber bullets, tear gas, and reportedly some live ammunition on an estimated 5,000 Palestinian demonstrators, chanting "freedom for our prisoners" and "freedom for Itaf Elyan."

The demonstrations were led by Muslim and Christian religious leaders who sought to put up a show of national unity to refute recent claims by Israel of Christian-Muslim rifts in Bethlehem.

Scores of protesters suffered respiratory injuries as a result of gas inhalation, and ambulances were taking the injured to nearby hospitals well into the night. A Palestinian Legislative Council member, Salah Al Ta'amsri, was injured, and the stage was set for further protests the next morning.

Meanwhile, Israeli representatives were holding talks with Elyan's relatives. It was reported that a tacit agreement had been reached between the two, which meant that Elyan's 3-month detention term would not be renewed in return for her breaking the hunger strike. Elyan accepted the deal, and ended her strike on Monday.

'Unity that includes us'

SPLA leader John Garang, speaking to Gamal Nkrumah, outlined his terms for a united Sudan

John Garang, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and head of the military command of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Sudanese opposition's umbrella organisation, has been in Cairo this week upon the invitation of President Hosni Mubarak. The visit, "long overdue," says the SPLA leader, represents a radical departure from Egypt's traditional Sudan policy. To date, Egypt has shied away from officially welcoming the SPLA leader so as not to be charged with advocating the division of Sudan. Mubarak stressed that Egypt only wishes to play a "facilitating role" in the Sudanese conflict.

Egypt upholds Sudanese territorial integrity as the cornerstone of its Sudan policy. But serious efforts are being made in Cairo to put an end to the hardships of the Sudanese people who have been fighting a debilitating civil war, that has claimed 1.5 million lives, in the past 14 years. Egyptian officials say that the country's efforts are not meant to duplicate, but to augment, the ongoing peace endeavours of the seven-nation East African Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) — the regional grouping which includes Sudan and its neighbours Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The majority of the IGADD members are hostile to Bashir and his Islamist regime. Presidential political adviser Osama El-Baz told *Al-Ahram Weekly*, "Garang's visit is a chance to reinforce Egypt's endeavours to create a more peaceful climate in the Nile Valley and Horn of Africa region."

Garang's unprecedented official visit to Egypt follows that of Sudanese First Vice-President Al-Zohair Mohamed Saleh who paid an unexpected visit to Cairo last month. But Egyptian observers say that there are no immediate plans for Cairo to play a mediating role between the National Islamic Front (NIF) government in Khartoum and Sudanese opposition forces who, following in the SPLA's footsteps, are waging war against Sudan's state army and the various militias that support the NIF government.

The civil war in Sudan, "which is no longer confined to the southern half of the country," Garang stressed, has an infinite capacity to inspire intense and impassioned controversy. Many in Africa south of the Sahara see it as a war between Africans and Arabs. In Africa, Garang is seen as a

hero and a champion of African rights. In the Arab world, he is eyed with suspicion and is sometimes seen as the devil incarnate. The Arab media traditionally portrayed Garang as a separatist die-hard bent on splitting Sudan in two.

But the SPLA leader denies such charges. "We are not against Arabs, but non-Arabs in Sudan must enjoy the same political and socio-economic rights as Sudanese of Arab descent. We are not against Islam, but religion must be separated from the state. We cannot be against Islam because the majority of our people are Muslim," Garang told *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

Farouk Abu Eissa, chief NDA spokesman in Cairo, told the *Weekly* that Garang's visit is a perfect opportunity to dispel the image of Garang as one who intends to do irreparable damage to Sudan's territorial integrity, Islam and Arab interests. At a lecture delivered at the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Garang was at pains to allay Arab fears. The single most important question underlying these anxieties appears to be: will self-determination for the people of southern Sudan within Garang's proposed confederation mean the secession of the southern half of the country? Vast and unexploited oil reserves, important mineral deposits and tremendous water resources for agricultural development are at stake.

Garang himself insists that the SPLA is a unionist, not a separatist, movement. "We are for Sudanese unity, but not unity for unity's sake. Perhaps what confuses some people is that we are for a unity that includes us — that includes all Sudanese. We are for a united Sudan which will give all its people their rights on an equal basis. Our principled position is for the unity of our country — Sudan."

Garang insists that the many deep-seated problems that have plagued Sudan since it gained independence in 1956 must be addressed. "The in-



Garang during his meeting with President Mubarak

justices done to the politically marginalised ethnic and religious groups in Sudan must be redressed. The movement towards a new Sudan requires an input from Egypt. We need to evolve a Sudanese commonwealth with which we all identify and to which we pledge our undivided allegiance," Garang told the *Weekly*. "Why should we assume that the northerners are more concerned about the unity of the country than the southerners? Naturally, southerners are not keen on an enforced Sudanese unity that relegates them to second class status."

The confederal proposal presented by the SPLA at the Nairobi peace talks last month was a tactical move and a deliberate SPLA negotiating position. We came out with several initiatives. Confederation was one proposal. We have been consistent over the past 15 years over our commitment to the unity of Sudan."

Garang refuted rumours of an impending split in his movement. "We survived vicious government offensives in the early 1990s — which took place at a time when leading figures such as Reik Machar deserted ranks and joined the government forces," he stressed. Machar formed the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) which cut a deal with Khartoum in April and he now chairs the Sudanese government's special council responsible for southern Sudanese issues — the

Southern Sudanese Coordination Council (SSCC) composed of southerners who hate or fear Garang.

"We have appointed governors based inside the five liberated regions now under our control — Bahr El-Ghazal, Upper Nile, Equatoria, South Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Each of these provinces has a SPLA governor who is in charge of the liberated areas of the governorate," he said.

Garang's main aim is to achieve a separation of state from religion. "Sudan is composed of more than 300 ethnic groups. It has more than 50 distinct languages. We have ethnic diversity and religious diversity and we must avoid those things that divide us. We must look for a Sudanese commonality that transcends localisms. We must repeal all laws that are religiously based. There must be a constitutional separation of religion and the state. Let us not make any particular religion the state religion. The NIF government rejected our proposal for the separation of religion and the state, and so we countered with our confederal proposal. A constitutional separation between religion and state will then be handled separately by the two confederal states. An Islamic state is untenable to southerners."

"In Nairobi we put the government and its allies on the spot. We exposed them as having a hidden agenda. The suggestion of a confederal arrangement cannot be looked at in isolation from what provoked it. The government insisted on an Islamic state. We, therefore, opted for a confederation. Constitutional niceties can be worked out later."

And, how did the southerners in Egypt receive Garang? Preserving the status quo is no longer acceptable to many Sudanese — especially in the south, the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile regions peopled by non-Arabised Sudanese. Most see Garang as the only leader capable of steering his movement through a difficult period.

Edited by Khaled Dawoud

Tehran in from the cold

Tehran's hosting of the Islamic summit next week is a product of Netanyahu's extremism and Khatami's moderation, writes **Safa Haeri**

Since the commemoration of Persia's 2500 years of almost uninterrupted monarchy in Persepolis in 1971, the Islamic Summit in Iran is the first of its kind. To give it maximum lustre and glory, the relatively impoverished Islamic Republic has set aside an "astronomic" sum of more than \$80 million for the occasion.

The combination of Israel's policy under Benjamin Netanyahu, who has rocked the foundations of the peace process with the Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general, on one hand, and the astonishing victory of Ayatollah Khatami in the presidential elections, on the other, has greatly helped Tehran in organising this eighth summit of the Jeddah-based Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

"Boycotted by the US, its relations strained with the European Union and isolated in the international scene, it was very important for the Islamic Republic to host this conference and give it maximum splendour. If we have succeeded, it is due to the double effect of the victory of Mr Khatami, who seems to be liked by the Arabs, and the excesses of Mr Netanyahu, who is despised by them," one Iranian political analyst in Tehran said on condition of anonymity.

There seems to be an agreement, however, among most of the participants that Tehran, because of its radical opposition to the current peace process, and the fact that it has no relations with the United States, the only nation with a make-or-break role in the region, is not the best place for such a meeting.

"Arab nations are certain that this particular summit will achieve very little other than enhancing the position of the Iranian Islamic Republic both in the region and in the world, something most of them bitterly fought against until recently. But since Mr Netanyahu threw the Oslo agreement into the sea, and since Washington continues to adopt double standards in the region, closing its eyes to Israeli abuses while opening them wide when it comes to the Arabs, there was both a willingness, albeit reluctant, and an obligation to come to Tehran," commented a senior Arab diplomat.

"It is a great achievement for the Iranian ruling mullahs to bring the Sunni-dominated Arab and Muslim states together in Tehran, the cradle of Shi'ism. It is a clear signal to the United States that there are limits for imposing, unilaterally, their will on others," said Rosemary Holis, director of Middle East Programmes at the Royal Institute for International Affairs in London.

High on the agenda are the question of Palestine, the bloody situation in Afghanistan, the Bosnian problem, the thorny question of Kashmir, the future of Iraq and, above all, the Jerusalem "time bomb", probably one of the few questions, if not the only one, that enjoys unanimity among all the 54 kings, heads of state, prime ministers and state representatives who will take part in the Tehran summit.

Analysts argue that on the Palestinian issue, one of the few issues where there is some convergence between the participants, nothing concrete will result. "Whatever the OIC might have to say in its final communiqué," on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslims can do nothing but continue to give money and weapons, for the final solution lies with the US and the EU. Iraq will remain a pariah; on Kashmir, one notes that many OIC members, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, have closer relations with India than Pakistan. On Afghanistan, which will not attend the summit, nothing can be achieved as long as the Taliban are recognised by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, while Iran continues to recognise the government of the former president, Borgheddine Rabbani. As a matter of fact, though Mr Rabbani and other Iranian-backed Afghan leaders opposed to the Taliban are now in Iran attending an Afghan Peace Seminar, the Iranian hosts have not invited them to the summit — a major concession to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

As the summit has become something of an Iranian affair, with its Iranian side definitely overshadowing other Arab and Middle Eastern aspects, the event has "far-reaching" significance for the Islamic Republic, says Dr Alireza Nurizadeh, the secretary of the London-based Centre for Arab-Iranian Studies, an independent institute dedicated to improving relations between the Sunni Arab and Shi'ite Iranian worlds.

"This is the clearest signal that, under the presidency of Mohamed Khatami, the policy of the ruling mullahs is moving away from revolutionary rhetoric towards pragmatism and international logic. Just think of a regime which used to shout day and night its eternal opposition to the destruction of the Zionist entity, and its will to fight Arab reactionary puppets to the end. Now imagine the same regime rolling out red carpets, dusting off royal residences. Just think of Mr Khatami walking side by side with those same personalities who were being insulted until quite recently. If we agree that the summit will achieve nothing in terms of the major issues facing the Muslims and the Arabs, in contrast, it will put an end to the revolutionary process in Iran, and this is a major achievement, for it can herald a more peaceful and prosperous region in the future," Mr Nurizadeh observed.

Iran is hosting this summit at a time of high domestic turbulence, as the powerful conservative mullahs who were severely defeated in the last presidential race are bracing themselves to bring to trial Ayatollah Hosseini Montazeri, one of the last prestigious Iranian grand ayatollahs, as well as Ayatollah Ahmed Azari Qomi, a senior cleric. In recent weeks, both have publicly voiced their opposition to the present leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Charged for "treason, complicity with foreign intelligence, and subversive anti-state activities," the two men face death sentences.

In a letter to Khamenei, Ayatollah Montazeri is reported to have demanded: "You, who cannot assure the security of one man like me, how are you going to guarantee the safety of so many important guests?"

Democracy, Indian-style

South Asia is in turmoil. In Pakistan, what began as a battle between the executive and judiciary has now escalated into a constitutional deadlock so serious that some fear for the survival of the democratic system which was restored in 1988, after eleven years of military rule. In Bangladesh, the main opposition party led by former Prime Minister Khaleida Zia has launched an extra-parliamentary, nationwide programme of agitation to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Life in all major urban centres of Bangladesh is paralysed by strikes and protests, and many people have been killed and injured. In Sri Lanka, the government of Chandrika Bandaranaike continues to battle with the hardy Tamil separatist guerrillas of the LTTE.

In India, South Asia's oldest and most populous democracy, the year-old coalition government collapsed last week when the amiable Inder Kumar Gujral tendered his resignation to the president who has asked him to continue as caretaker prime minister until a new government is formed or, failing that, fresh elections are scheduled. The failure of Gujral's government to continue in office, and the uneasy prospects for the formation of a new government reflect the problems facing Indian democracy following the decline of the Indian National Congress, India's oldest national party which was once led by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Under Nehru who died in 1965, the Congress had a virtual monopoly of power, an advantage he used in order to endow India with a democratic and secular character. After him the mantle of Congress leadership fell on his daughter Indira Gandhi — no relation of the Mahatma — who, following a brief interregnum, became India's prime minister.

Indira Gandhi was a strong leader but unlike her father she was neither a deep-

ly committed democrat nor a charismatic enough leader to hold together a diverse and continent-wide political party without manipulating the divisions and rivalries within it. Her style had a demoralising and divisive impact on the party which gradually suffered also from the natural process of erosion. It was under her leadership in 1977 that the Congress lost control of the federal government for the first time since independence in 1947. The process of decline set in, arousing a host of political ambitions in both national and regional politics. Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 by Sikh dissidents in revenge for her ordering the army to dislodge Sikh rebels from the Golden Temple, the most sacred of Sikh shrines. Rajiv Gandhi, her son and successor as prime minister, was assassinated in 1991 allegedly by the LTTE, in revenge for India's military intervention against the Tamil separatists of Sri Lanka.

The two assassinations virtually dissolved the Nehru dynasty line that was holding the Congress together. Its decline was sudden and rapid, with defection playing a role in it. Other parties gained corresponding ground. In the general elections of 1996, the Congress came a poor second after the BJP, a right-wing Hindu nationalist formation supported by other more militant, and more or less fascist Hindu groupings. The BJP formed a government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpai which won the distinction of being the shortest-lived government in Indian history, as Mr Vaj-

Throughout the sub-continent, governments are finding they can't make a democratic onelette without breaking eggs, writes Ehab Al-Ahmad



Indian President and caretaker Prime Minister (photo: Reuters)

pai failed within the week to muster the required majority in India's parliament, the Lok Sabha. Here, one should note that the magic number for forming a government in the 545 member parliament is 272.

Gujral became the prime minister in May 1996, at the head of a thirteen party coalition whose members ranged from the Communist Party-Marxist (CCP-M) to the DMK, an ethnic Tamil party. This was an unlikely coalition of disparate groupings united only by a shared aversion to the BJP and its partners. The only surprise about the fall of this government is that it did not happen earlier. "How far could a cat with thirteen tails walk?" was an Indian friend's rhetorical answer. The immediate reason for its collapse is that the Congress, which supported the coalition without joining the government, decided to withdraw its support. Its reasons for doing so provide a portrait of sorts of the Indian National Congress today.

The Nehru family, with Rajiv Gandhi's Italian widow at its head, is still the pub-

lic legitimiser of the Congress. The family insists that those responsible for Rajiv's murder be identified and punished. Hence, the Congress has been demanding that the Commission Report on the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. It is widely believed that the Report identifies the DMK, a coalition partner, as being implicated in the murder. Should the Jain Report be made public, DMK would have to leave the coalition, and the fragile government would have fallen. Other coalition partners objected, and Gujral demurred. As the Congress indicated the withdrawal of its support from the coalition, Gujral had no choice but to resign.

The truth is more complex. The Congress is factionalised around at least three power brokers. All have chafed at being on the margins of power, and at least one faction has flirted with the idea of coalescing with the BJP to form a government. Hence, defections are feared unless somehow the Congress can get into power which was not possible

with the current coalition partners. Mr Kesar, the current President of the Congress, had been scouting for sometime for coalition partners. Could he be calculating that prospects of power will serve as the magnet to bring partners in and prevent defections? In their meeting with President KR Narayanan on 1 December, Congress leaders assured him that they can muster the required majority, and urged that they be invited to form the government. Similar assurances were given to the president by leaders of BJP, the other contender for power. Both obviously expect that once they are invited to form the government, defectors from other parties will join them. Gujral, on the other hand, has to hold his United Front partners together, so he argues that the political deadlock can be resolved only if fresh elections are held. In the coming few days the president will have to decide.

There is much resistance among legislators to the idea of more elections. Elections are an expensive business. If another is called, it will be India's fourth in three years. Most politicians would hate to have to go through it again. Yet, to this observer at least it appears unlikely that either the Congress or the BJP can form a viable government. The current parliamentary arithmetic appears to be against it. BJP is the largest party in the Lok Sabha with 162 members; its allies bring its strength to 193. It needs 79 more members to reach the magic number — 272. It has been wooing a Con-

gress faction. If Sharad Pawar makes the unlikely decision of joining with his followers, the BJP will gain at most 30 more members, and will still need more than forty seats. Moreover, the partners it seeks are not likely to be stable.

The Congress is equally ill-placed to form a government. With 140 members, it needs 132 more to command a parliamentary majority. The TMC, an ethnic Tamil party and Bihar supporters of jailed provincial leader Laloo Prasad Yadav may join it with about 20 members each. It will still be short of a majority in parliament by some 90 members. It is hard to imagine where it will find them, and in the event that it does, whether it will be able to hold them together without producing a mob in place of a cabinet. After all, every coalition partner wants at least one ministerial position. It seems unlikely then that either of the two self-proclaimed contenders to power can actually deliver a workable government.

President Narayanan is a sensible man, prone to seeking moderate solutions based on consensus. He may try to persuade all or at least most parties to join a "national" government, with a mission to carry on for at least another year before fresh elections are held. Since most parliamentarians are averse to fresh elections, he may well succeed. But again, it seems unlikely. So the prospects are that Indians will soon be going to the polls, perhaps after one of the two major parties — the Congress or BJP — has been allowed a brief (and doubtless unsuccessful) attempt at governing. But will more elections help yield greater clarity as Gujral hopes? A realistic look at India's current political map suggests that the next elections will produce, at best, a slightly more durable shakshouka than the one he has served up. And at worst? Who knows, in these uncertain South Asian times.

A way out of the greenhouse?

As representatives of 160 UN member states meet in Japan to discuss the future of the planet's climate, Peter Snowden examines the role played by the developing world in the deadlocked negotiations — and asks whether it may not finally be the South that holds the key to a solution

Ray-Bans for polar bears? Fine wines from Finland? "Global warming" may sound nice, if you live in the North, but as El Nino heats up and the Gulf Stream cools down, "global chaos" might in fact be nearer to what most of us — and our children's children — will have to live with. The final bill for the last two centuries of industrial "development" is more likely to be counted in crops lost, epidemics propagated and populations displaced — whether by flood or drought — than in the number of bottles of Ambre Solaire shifted by the supermarket chains.

The extent of the potential damage is properly incalculable. Drowned cities and desert storms are one thing; a new ice age is another. Yet the atmosphere of the world is now heating up faster than at any time since human life began on earth, 160,000 years ago. As Aubrey Meyer, director of the London-based Global Commons Institute (GCI), one of the leading independent advocacy groups working on climate change, told *Al-Ahram Weekly*: "The uncertainty at this point is with regard to the under-representation of the dangers we face, rather than the opposite. Things are probably worse than the 'scientific consensus' has allowed for. Many positive feedback mechanisms are simply not represented in the existing climate models. We are globally moving into political and ecological double-jeopardy at an accelerating rate, with no real sense of how near the thresholds of irreversible change we are."

But what is a boy to do? At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, many of the most powerful boys in the world — the elected leaders of the industrialised nations — signed a commitment to stabilise emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in their countries at 1990 levels by the year 2000. Five years later it is clear that few, if any, of those nations will come anywhere near meeting that target. Those that do will achieve this largely as a by-product of other policies — closing down industries that were unprofitable or politically inconvenient — and not through any specific act of political will. At the same time, attempts to advance beyond this initial agreement have been

consistently log jammed. After a year of frustration, inaction and continuing "disinformation" (largely funded by the international fossil fuel industry), government delegates now have one last chance to thrash out an agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at their meeting in Kyoto, from 1 to 10 December. If it's hard to be pessimistic — the stakes are far too high for that — it's harder still to be confident of any progress, even at the level of realpolitik. So far the horse-trading has been all teeth and no horse.

Until very recently, the proposals on the table were virtually a natural catastrophe in themselves. Following the signing of the Berlin Mandate in 1995, it was agreed that GHG emission quotas would be imposed only on "Annex I" (i.e. industrialised) nations, who had the longest criminal record in this respect, and were thus responsible for most of the damage to date. Backed by a majority of environmental pressure groups, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), many of whose members are threatened with economic, if not physical, extinction by rising sea levels, opened the bidding by demanding the Annex I nations make a reduction of 20% by the year 2000. The US, who had promised a "substantial" gesture as recently as last year, delayed showing their hand until the very last minute, only to announce on 22 October last that they were prepared to grant themselves (and others) an extension until 2010 of their existing commitment to stabilise emissions at 1990 levels — if the developing nations would do something in return. The EU and Japan each made their own proposals, falling somewhere in between these two extremes, while Australia

(whose economy is largely dependent on energy exports) generously proposed that no one should be obliged to do anything at all.

The result, as December approached, seemed to promise nothing but lost opportunity. One of the most important factors contributing to this deadlock has been the inaction of the developing world. The countries that have most to lose from global warming and its consequences also seemed, until recently, to have least to say on the subject. Their main negotiating vehicle, the G-77 (and China), was paralysed by conflicts of interest between oil-producing nations, oil-consuming nations (chiefly India and China), and resource-poor countries (especially those of Africa). This situation was only aggravated by the Berlin Mandate, which effectively exempted the developing countries from having to envisage their own responsibilities. Questioning the mandate was rapidly established as heresy in the environmental community and for many

nations of the South. Yet it also soon became apparent that unless it was questioned, there would be no agreement at all. This has been crystal clear since the fossil fuels lobby, passed a unanimous resolution refusing to ratify any treaty which did not require some concessions from the developing world. Recently, however, there have been signs that

there might be a way out of the current stalemate. A number of "dissident" pressure groups, led by Aubrey Meyer's GCI, and including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, have been working hard to promote a Model, based on what the GCI calls the principles of "Contraction and Convergence". The aim of this proposal is to stabilise the quantities of GHGs in the atmosphere over a sufficiently long timescale (say 100 years), by working towards convergence of per capita emissions. Ambitious global reduction targets would be set in the medium term, but those countries that currently have low per capita energy consumption would be allowed to expand their use of fossil fuels for a period of time, perhaps as far as 2045. This may sound suicidal to die-in-the-wool environmentalists, but it is in fact no more than recognising the inevitable. Not only are the developing economies set to "grow" whatever happens, but excluding those countries from emissions quotas may well only encourage dirty industries to delocalise, aggravating unemployment in the North and pollution in the South, without encouraging endogenous development where it is needed.

By adopting what GCI calls a "constitutional" approach, as opposed to the more limited statutory solutions that have dominated the debate so far, this potential pitfall can be turned into an asset. Under the "C & C" scheme, the poor countries (which tend to have large relative populations and low per capita energy consumption) would find themselves with a large surplus of unused emission permits, which the rich countries could then buy from them in order to continue burning oil and coal at near-to-current rates while they gradually wean themselves off their fossil fuel addiction. This would effectively transform resource-poor nations at a stroke into the owners of a very valuable commodity. Meyer told the *Weekly*: "Because trading of permits would become possible internationally, the global benefit of avoided emissions can be achieved by



'Uncertainty and gloom are in'

Asia's currency crisis dominated discussions at the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) summit meeting that took place in the Canadian Pacific port of Vancouver. Until this year's gloomy summit, all previous meetings were upbeat. APEC itself hit its first major bump at its 5th Summit in Vancouver last week, after eight years of a seemingly unstoppable drive towards wider and faster trade liberalisation around the Pacific Rim.

United States President Bill Clinton labelled the currency and financial crises sweeping East Asia as merely "a few little glitches in the road", drawing swift and strong criticism from his partners. The Final Declaration issued after two days of talks behind closed doors and a well-planned photo-ops, put a brave face on endorsing the region's economic strength, calling for united action to battle the ongoing financial turmoil, and renewing commitment to more trade liberalisation — in nine sectors identified by foreign and trade ministers. It also called for a successful conclusion to World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on financial services by the agreed deadline of 12 December, 1997.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, host of the meeting, even announced that Russia, Vietnam and Peru would join APEC in 1998, bringing the total membership to 21. Behind the facade however, APEC's unity showed signs of cracking.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad of Malaysia, whose currency, the ringgit, has lost 35 per cent of its value this year as a result of speculation, reminded business leaders of the recent G-15 call for restrictions on currency trading. Relying on market forces to run an economy would do as much damage as the discredited central planning policies of communist governments, he said. "Surrender your independence to those who know best and you will prosper: this is the creed of the market," he said.

"The turmoil cannot be waved away by brave talk," said Philippine President Fidel Ramos, adding the crisis was not Asia's alone. "We recognise the global dimension of the problem, and the need for global, cooperative solutions," he said after the summit. Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai said no nation was immune from the epidemic of financial failure sweeping the region — after Thailand devalued its currency and accepted an emergency bailout package from the IMF last summer. "Confidence and optimism are out, uncertainty and gloom are in," he said, adding that the stock market crash in South Korea "could happen to any other economy in the region".

While South Korea's stock market continued to fall amid panic amongst investors, President Kim Young-Sam looked to a \$20-billion bailout package from the IMF and Korea's APEC

Asia-Pacific rim nations met in Canada where the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) hit its first major bump in the road, writes Jooneed Khan from Vancouver

partners. Japan was expected to bear the brunt of bailing out South Korea, but Japanese officials stressed that Japan is in no position to help since it is embroiled in a financial crisis of its own. The giant Japanese brokerage firm Yamaichi Securities folded under a staggering \$24-billion debt. It was the largest Japanese corporation to collapse since the end of World War II and came less than a week after Japan's 10th largest bank folded.

Looking for membership in the WTO, China, meanwhile, confidently shrugged off the pessimism gripping its Asian neighbours, saying its "prudent" economic management would protect it from the turmoil. "The situation in China is excellent," President Jiang Zemin said in a dinner speech. The Hong Kong stock market has been free-falling since the former British colony was handed back to China last summer, but Chinese officials insisted their country was immune from the crisis, thanks to its huge trade surplus, its immense foreign exchange reserves, and the fact that the limited convertibility of its currency acted as a barrier to speculators.

The APEC cracks were accentuated by open speculation in the US media that the US found itself in a uniquely strong position to gain from Asia's loss. "While Asia tiger economies are on their knees, the US and like-minded trading partners have the upper hand. US companies looking for a bargain are in shopper

paradise", wrote Microsoft-NBC (MSNBC) network on the Web.

"Right now, Washington has a rare opportunity to convince, cajole or coerce its Asian trading partners to accept its free-trade agenda. Bailout funds from the IMF come with strings attached — requirements that tend to parallel American wishes," added MSNBC. Walden Bello, of the Bangkok-based Focus on the Global South, concurred. The US, which has "sizeable trade deficits with Asian countries, and the IMF, which has organised bailout funds for Indonesia and Thailand, are taking advantage of the currency crisis to press for further liberalisation of South-East Asian economies," Bello said in a paper delivered at the parallel Peoples Summit on APEC.

The highly successful Peoples Summit dealt another telling blow to APEC's seemingly invincible armour. In almost no other APEC country with the exception of Canada, could such a huge international gathering of youth, women, human rights activists, trade union leaders, political opponents and NGOs meet openly to debate child labour, the over-exploitation of women at the bottom of the subcontracting chain, the persecution of trade unionists, the arrest and torture of political opponents, and the extensive violations of human rights in their countries.

Edited by Gamal Nkrumah

Credit International D'Egypte

46 El Batal Ahmed Abd El Aziz Street
Mohandessin - Giza

The Bank wishes to announce to stockholders that in order to facilitate the trading process of the shares on the stock exchange and to keep up with the latest developments in the securities market:

The Bank has registered its shares in the central depository system of Misr for Clearing and Settlement Company.

The system will begin operating on December 15, 1997.

As from the above date, any transaction on the bank's shares will be through a statement issued by the above company for each shareholder to prove the shares' ownership.

Accordingly, the shareholders are kindly requested to deposit their shares in the Central Depository System through one of the bookkeepers.

MPs slam US aid to parliament

An American grant to "support" the People's Assembly and the Shura Council came under heavy parliamentary fire this week, with MPs charging the grant was an "insult" to the Egyptian parliament. **Gamal Essam El-Din** attended the heated debate

United States foreign aid agreements have become a source of constant contention for members of the People's Assembly elected in December 1995.

The criticism, however, reached a crescendo in the recently reconvened parliament this week when the MPs began debating the second amendment of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Decision Support Services (DSS) grant. Leftist and other opposition MPs say that the grant represents an insult to the parliament.

This grant, whose total value is \$12 million, began with a \$2 million grant in 1993 to support legislative and administrative reforms in the People's Assembly and the consultative Upper House, the Shura Council.

The Assembly approved the first amendment of this DSS grant in May 1995, raising it to \$4.3 million. The Assembly was scheduled this week to further raise it to almost \$8.3 million.

But leftist and Nasserist MPs described the DSS grant as being "directly contemptuous" of parliamentarians.

According to Mohamed El-Doheiri, an MP from the leftist Tagammu Party, USAID has not only given itself the right to impose sanctions on the recipients (the People's Assembly and Shura Council), but also stipulates that it should have access to confidential information

about the grant project.

"We, as members of the People's Assembly, are not Iraq — to be treated with such contempt and subjugated to America's conditions in such a humiliating way," El-Doheiri said.

Sameh Ashour, the Nasserist Party's only MP, was more outspoken in criticising the DSS grant.

"It is not only a matter of wording an agreement in a humiliating way, but now we are placed in a position where America is pushing us to adopt certain policies at the expense of the independence of the People's Assembly and Shura Council," he said.

Explaining his view of the way the grant infringes on the legislature's independence, Ashour pointed to the DSS's explanatory note which says that the grant's objective is to help boost economic liberalisation and privatisation policies in Egypt. "To this end, the proceeds of the DSS grant's first stage were primarily spent on 26 leading deputies... in the Assembly's economic, legislative and general committees," said Ashour. He implied that the money was intended to dictate policy to the recipients.

"If the Assembly is required to remain independent from the [executive branch], it should, first and foremost, be required to retain this independence in face of such stark foreign intervention," said Ashour.

The Assembly's speaker, Fathi Sorour, clearly

angered by El-Doheiri's and Ashour's charges, explained that the government, not the Assembly, is the recipient of USAID's DSS grant.

"The provisions of this grant agreement are by no means meant to address the Assembly. It is the government that concluded this grant with the objective of helping the Assembly's efforts in improving its information network and providing training to its employees," he said.

"The Assembly's decisions are not tied to any objectives conjured up by the imagination of any person or institution," said Sorour.

Other MPs, such as majority leader Ahmed Abu Zeid, urged deputies "not to deal with foreign grants with such heightened sensitivity, because the terms [of the grant] are really far from infringing upon the sovereignty of the Assembly or the government."

The heated exchange, however, came to an end when Kamal El-Shazli, minister of state for parliamentary affairs, surprised the majority deputies by approving the withdrawal of the DSS grant from parliamentary consideration for further revision.

"I agree with deputies who referred to the sanctions contained in this grant agreement," he said.

"But this may be due to some mistakes in translation or to the original text itself. If this grant proved to be adversely affecting the Assembly in any way, the government would not

hesitate to reject it," said El-Shazli.

Equally controversial was another USAID grant for technical cooperation and feasibility studies which, opponents claimed, accelerated the privatisation programme to the detriment of the national economy.

The first amendment to the grant was signed in March 1994, raising the grant amount from \$10 million to \$20 million. The second amendment augmented the grant to \$30 million. Although MPs, from the opposition and majority parties alike, were equally outspoken in criticising this grant, which was raised by the third amendment to \$49.8 million, their criticism was not strong enough to have the grant rejected or withdrawn.

Businessman Khaled Mahmoud, one of four deputies currently facing trial for obtaining hefty banking loans without collateral, charged that disbursement of this grant took effect ahead of approval by the Assembly.

"These kinds of grants, which are aimed at accelerating the privatisation process, usually leave adverse effects on the national economy," said Mahmoud.

"Most of this grant's funds were misappropriated in terms of corrupting a handful of public enterprise officials by paying them hefty salaries, bonuses and incentives," said Mahmoud.

Mahmoud even called for sending officials en-

trusted with valuing shares of companies slated for privatisation to trial "because they valued these companies at lower-than-real prices although large amounts of the grant money were allocated to valuation studies."

El-Badri Farghali, a veteran leftist MP from Port Said, described the US grants as "the hangman's noose because when America gives us a dollar, it takes in return thousands of dollars from Egypt."

Responding to these criticisms, Zafer El-Bishri, minister of state for planning, explained that the scope of the grant does not include privatisation processes, but is mainly concerned with financing feasibility studies conducted by the state's different sectors and civil cooperative societies.

Another businessman, Salah Shaladin, also complained that large amounts of USAID grants are usually provided to consultancy offices. Nawal El-Farawy, a former economy minister, argued that consultancy work was very important and dismissed that large amounts of this grant were spent as incentives to a handful of public enterprise officials and consultancy experts.

State Minister El-Shazli concluded the debates by giving a government promise to provide the Assembly with a detailed statement about the disbursement of these types of grants.

Softening the blow

Egypt is doing everything it can to save its tourism industry after 58 tourists were massacred by terrorists. **Rehab Saad** looks at the government's plans to salvage the country's top foreign currency earner

In a meeting with Japanese businessmen this week, Economy Minister Youssef Boutros Ghali said that the Luxor massacre, in which 58 tourists lost their lives on 17 November, could result in losses estimated at \$500 million for Egypt during the current tourist season alone.

At some \$3 billion a year, tourism is the country's top foreign currency earner, as well as one of its fastest growing industries.

In an attempt to soften the blow, the government has taken a number of emergency measures, announced this week by Prime Minister Kamal El-Ganzouri. Banks will continue to finance the industry, and will postpone payments on all debts owed by it for a three-month period, Ganzouri announced. The government measures also provided that all extra fees on floating hotels, restaurants, and en-

trance visas will be waived.

In a complementary move, EgyptAir, the national carrier, will increase its domestic flights and cut domestic rates by 50 per cent for a three-month period. Additionally, any tariffs exceeding two per cent, charged by local tourism councils, will also be annulled.

The government hopes that these steps will dampen the impact of the attack on an industry which brought in 4.1 million tourists by the end of fiscal year 1996-97.

Fearing that fewer tourists would lead to layoffs in the industry, El-Ganzouri also decreed that no tourism industry employees should be dismissed in the public or private sectors.

"Tourism revenues do not go into the government's treasury, but to the thousands of people working in the tourism sector," said Mamdouh El-Beltagi, the tourism minister, adding that ter-

rorists are not undermining the welfare of the government, but that of the people.

Tourism Ministry statistics reveal that about 150,000 people are employed by hotels, 85,000 in tourist villages, 18,310 in travel agencies, 40,000 in bazaars and 3,985 as tour guides. Thousands of others are employed in related service and support industries such as taxis and restaurants.

Following the Luxor attack, several travel agencies and hotels sought to minimise losses by laying off some employees and closing offices abroad. At Cairo Airport, for example, 23 travel agencies, responding to an alarming number of cancellations, fired many of their employees and cut by half the salaries of scores more.

"We did this to be able to pay the rents for our offices in the airport, as well as cover overhead costs, payments

on tourist buses and taxes," said the manager of one of the agencies, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We are facing a real crisis," said Ehab Gaddis, the general manager of Gaddis Hotel in Luxor. "I am trying to tighten up my budget... Unfortunately, I have to start with the hotel workers" because of the other costs that must be paid, including bank debts.

It was not immediately clear whether those dismissed before El-Ganzouri's decision was taken would get their jobs back.

In a move to boost the number of visitors to Upper Egypt this season, the Education Ministry has decided to postpone the mid-year school holiday until after the holy month of Ramadan. It is a decision which Gaddis welcomes, as it will encourage domestic tourism during this period.

However, he said, "this will last for

only two weeks, and then everything returns to the way it was."

In addition, domestic tourism means that "the money will be spent by Egyptians and (will go) to Egyptians, so there will be no hard currency and no increase in the national income," he said.

Along with hotels and restaurants, tourism projects were affected by the militant attack.

While about 40 per cent of the country's tourism projects were unaffected, another 40 per cent are either having problems with the banks now, or depend on tourism revenues for financing, said Adel Radi, head of the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). He made no mention of the status of the remaining 20 per cent.

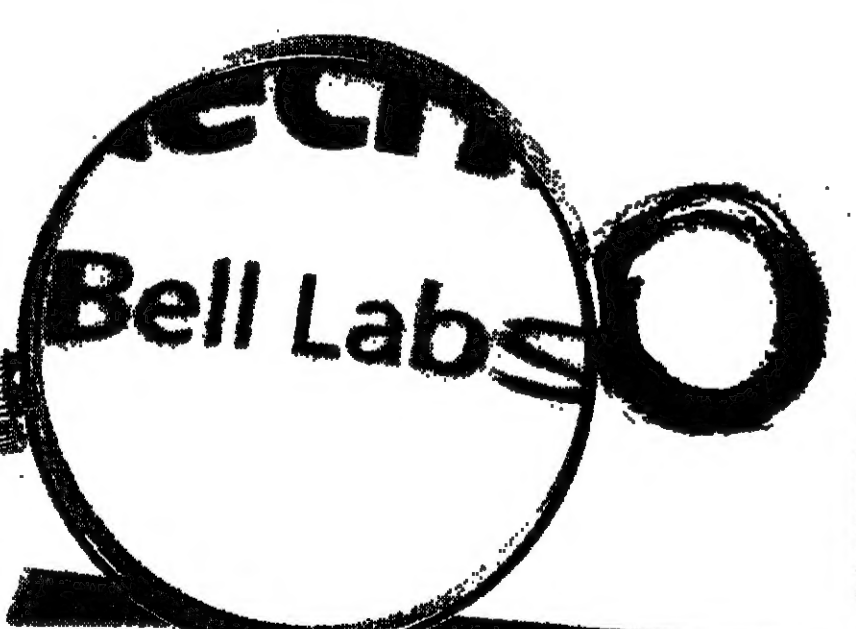


Nabil Abdel-Latif, head of the investors association for the Riviera project, a new tourism project, said that investors met with El-Ganzouri last week to discuss the situation.

"We requested that banks should go on giving loans to investors despite the crisis," he said. "We also requested the postponement of any instalments or bank interest payments until the crisis passes."

"Most of our requests have been met, and this is a good sign that tourism development will continue," he said.

Edited by Ghada Ragab



see what sets us
apart from other
communications companies ?

It's clear:
Lucent Technologies is fueled by
R&D engine Bell Labs.

Inventors of the transistor, the laser,
fiber optics, the digital satellite, and cellular technology.

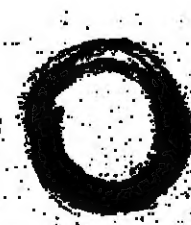
Home of 24,000 engineers and scientists (7 Nobel prizes).

With ideas and resources to help you meet any/every
complex communications need you
face in today's advanced information society.

Need to magnify your communications capabilities?

Look to Lucent Technologies,
the only place to find Bell Labs.

Visit our booth # 3.45 during the
Cairo Telecomp. 97, Dec. 4th - 7th at The Cairo
International Conference Center, Nasr City.



Lucent Technologies
Bell Labs Innovations
Cairo
Egypt
Tel. +202 567 4438

We make the things that make communications work.

Al-Ahram: A Diwan of contemporary life

"The Administrative Exile Commission in Girga convened and began to call out the names of the accused, beginning with the criminals of the district of Tabta. Five names were called out, the first of whom was Mohamed Abu Zeid El-Sayed, known as Abu Zeid El-Hilali. The accused is 36-years-old, light-brown complexioned, of average height and build, and with a black moustache.

"The police commissioner read out the charges against the above-mentioned defendant. The list of charges indicate that the accused is a member of a large and important family. His father was the mayor of the village of Johaina; however, the son began to associate with the criminal element in that village and eventually became one of them and worked his way up to become the head of a large and notorious gang. Abu Zeid had been accused of a number of thefts, most committed with the use of force. He had also been accused of murder and the intent to commit murder. However, he was acquitted of most of these crimes while other charges were suspended due to lack of evidence. The defendant has a criminal record according to which he has been suspected of having committed over 20 crimes.

"Abu Zeid denied all the charges in spite of the testimony of witnesses who offered the clearest proof of his ghastly criminal past and the terror he has inflicted upon the villagers. Yet when he was acquitted of the most recent charge brought against him, he was greeted as a local hero and paraded from the Tabta train station to his village of Johaina where he received delegations of well-wishers and was presented with numerous gifts.

"After hearing all the witnesses for the defence and for the prosecution, and after subsequent deliberations, the court sentenced the defendant to five years parole and the payment of a LE1,000 bond within 15 days during which period he will remain under detention. If the said bond is not paid within the stipulated period, he will be exiled to the area designated for that purpose."

This report on the trial of one of the most notorious gangsters of early 20th century Egypt appeared in *Al-Ahram* on 6 September 1909. It was part of the newspaper's coverage of the trials that followed the promulgation of the "administrative exile law" on 4 July of that year, providing a captivating account of rural law and order during the opening decade of this century.

It was on 24 January 1909 that the Ministry of Interior first moved to create commissions to prepare lists of those individuals whose continued presence in their areas of residence is deemed to pose a threat to public safety.

The reason for the action was cited in the Ministry's statement: "The incidence of crime has risen sharply over this past year and, as the customary procedures that have been followed until the present have not yielded the desired results, it has been decided to adopt harsher measures guaranteed to deter repeated criminal offenders whose presence has come to pose a serious hazard to security in the areas in which they reside." The measures involved "conducting an investigation into all crimes of which these individuals have been accused, even though they have not been brought to trial due to lack of sufficient evidence, and to investigate these individuals' character and style of life. If it is determined that they constitute a threat to public safety in the areas in which they reside, they will be sentenced accordingly to exile or other punishment as deemed appropriate."

One *Al-Ahram* reader, Mustafa Bakri El-Aslout, contributed an article, offering a rather unique interpretation of the Ministry of Interior's action. "The prisons are so crowded that they have had to set up tents," he wrote. "The reason for this overcrowding is that they built prisons which are more like enormous palaces where inmates can eat decent food, wear clean clothes and sleep in tidy places and even find work, all in accordance with the regime set for them by the prison warden and physician."

What El-Aslout overlooked was the fact that notorious gangsters like Abu Zeid El-Hilali often managed to escape this experience. They were expert at exploiting the legal loopholes in order to gain acquittals for the crimes they committed.

It was not long before the new law came into effect. Consisting of 22 articles, it was to apply "to all individuals who have known records for assault, or threatening assault upon the lives and property of others." The commissions charged with conducting the trials of these individuals were to consist of "a district director or governor as chairman, a chief magistrate from the national court system, a public prosecutor and two rural notables."

211

A mounting crime wave in the first decade of the 20th century led the government to devise new penalties for people who proved to be security risks and for repeat offenders in cases where definite evidence was absent. The new law provided for internal exile for the first time in the history of modern Egypt. The Kharga Oases in the Western Desert were designated as the site of exile camps. Exiles were put to work there in workshops and agricultural enterprises. They received daily wages and were allowed to have their families live with them. Dr Yunnan Labib Rizk reviews the experiment from reports published by *Al-Ahram*.



Illustration: Mohamed Helwan

chase their daily food supplies for 15 milleremes (1.5 piastres) and save the remainder of their pay."

As this report indicates, convicts were frequently accompanied into exile by their families. According to the report, "there are now 400 exiles in the Kharga Oases in addition to 350 male and female family members who have accompanied them. Up to now there are 160 houses to accommodate them and construction is under way on an additional 160 homes. Each housing unit consists of two rooms and a reception area. There already exists a school for boys which has 30 pupils and a school for girls will soon be built next to it."

Other facilities were provided. For religious edification there was a resident sheikh. The convicts "listen to his sermons twice a day and they also pray the required five times a day." At the same time, the newspaper assured its readers, security was tight. The exile colony was manned by a commander, five officers, 56 foot policemen, 46 mounted policemen, 3 on mules and 43 on camels. Perhaps not so comforting, however, was the final note that "none of the exiles have managed to escape, with the exception of eight and police are currently searching for them."

After the promulgation of the "administrative exile law", *Al-Ahram* was keen to cover the trials. In part, at least, it saw this endeavour as its own contribution to deterring crime. It may have also been in deference to some explicit or implied government instructions.

Al-Ahram appeared equally concerned in its coverage to vest the proceedings with an appropriate reverence.

Al-Ahram's readers must have been shocked by some very disturbing truths revealed by its coverage of the trials. Firstly, they discovered that most of the "individuals with criminal records" who were brought before the commissions enjoyed the protection of rural notables and, indeed, frequently worked for them. Moreover, many of the not-

ables were not only implicated in some of the crimes, but actively participated in carrying them out, leading the commission panel to summon these leading rural figures before it. As *Al-Ahram* remarked, "only very few of the criminals are poor and have no backing." On one occasion it reported that police in Deirut were pursuing a group of criminals who had fled after their gang leader died and that "they hid out in the home of a wealthy man of this area where they were arrested."

The scandal reached its peak when, on 25 May 1910, under the headline, "Whoever would have believed it?" *Al-Ahram* listed the names of a number of prominent rural notables who had been brought before the commission and commented, "Most, if not all, of the criminal incidents take place at the command of individuals who would describe as notables, while the actual perpetrators are no more than their mute instruments."

Additionally, readers discovered that in some instances crime was a family business. Ibrahim El-Sayed Nagi from Shandawil "is a notorious malicious felon as was his father and grandfather before him." Hassan Khalil Abu Leila from Banawit "is an infamous criminal and his father before him struck fear throughout the countryside." Ahmed Harfoush was from a family "all members of which are dastardly criminals who have been sentenced to hard labour." Moreover, many criminals had particular lines of specialisation. One defendant from Beheira "turned out the lights of the semaphore at Tawfiqiya station, stopped the train so that he and the members of his gang could board it and rob its cargo." One horrifying criminal was Hassanin Hassanin Ahmed from Assiut who "waits until a husband leaves his home in order to break into the house and assault and rape women at knife-point." The correspondent covering the trial of this criminal added, "All present during these proceedings expressed their profound amazement and sorrow that there could even exist such a manner of human being who could commit such treachery against his fellow man and so tarnish the name of this village."

According to *Al-Ahram's* figures, the work of the "administrative exile commissions" was successful, for the rate of crime dropped considerably over the following years. One is tempted to wonder what effect such commissions might have on the rising crime rates of today.

The author is a professor of history and head of *Al-Ahram* History Studies Centre.



35 new companies established

THE COMPANIES Committee of the Ministry of Economy has approved the establishment of 35 companies, with total authorised capitals of LE667 million. Of these companies, 34 have a combined share capital of LE161 million, and LE173.391 million in issued capital. The new companies will operate in a variety of fields, ranging from trade, tourism and real estate to industry, services and contracting.

Ahmed Fouad Atta, head of the Committee, stated that agreements have been made with German and Thai companies in Egypt to carry out surveys of the Egyptian market.

Money & Business



Foodstuff quality seminar held

DR YOUSSEF Wali, minister of agriculture and land reclamation, opened a conference in Alexandria this week on the role of quality control in the foodstuffs industries. Participating in the conference were a number of delegates from Arab and Western countries.

Eng. Mohamed Ahmed Selim, secretary-general of the conference, said that one of the topics presented for discussion was the use of modern technology in the foodstuffs industry in light of the GATT with regards to quality control.

Reserve your space now at the premiere computer fair in Egypt, ACITEX

THE CHANCE to be included is still available; starting from today for one week you can still rent exhibition space in the Sixth Ahrum Computer and Information Technology Exhibition (ACITEX), scheduled from 18-21 February 1998 in Cairo. It is worth mentioning that ACITEX will be held concurrently with the Sixth International Artificial Intelligence Conference.

Responding to companies' increased demand to rent exhibition space at ACITEX, one of the most successful exhibitions in the field, organisers have opened a limited number of exhibition areas for rent. In coordination with the Cairo International Conference Centre, limited exhibition space will be added to the main exhibition hall in a suitable way that will not block visitors' paths nor the exhibitors themselves.

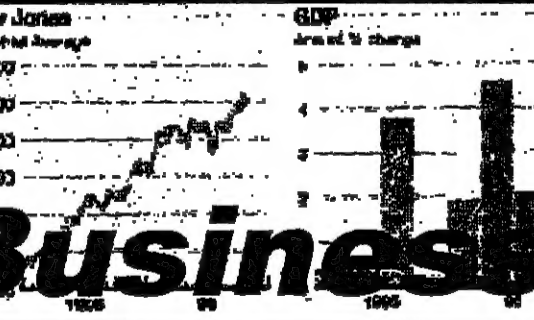
It is noteworthy that state-of-the-art methods have been taken into consideration and are being employed in organising the exhibition. ACITEX will be held simultaneously with the Sixth International Artificial Intelligence Conference, organised by the Egyptian Computer Association in cooperation with the National Information Committee of the Scientific Research Academy, and the Faculty of Computer Science at Helwan University and the American University in Cairo.

A great number of foreign professors and Egyptian professors residing abroad will attend the exhibition and the conference. Nearly 70 research papers will be presented during the sessions, which will take place at the Press Centre of the Cairo International Conference Centre.

Seminars will also be organised by exhibiting companies interested in presenting and demonstrating their products and services before the public.

Foreign exhibitions will also have a strong showing at the exhibition, including SYSTEMS from Munich, specialised in telecommunications, and CeBIT in Hannover, specialised in computer and information technology. Such foreign exhibitions help put ACITEX on the international map, while demonstrating the Egyptian determination to continue marching in support of the computer and information technology movement.

To reserve exhibition space, please call 3391071, or fax 3941866.



Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt

The Zakat Fund Committee of the Bank announces its 17th competition for the memorisation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an

Categories and conditions:

A) The Grand Prize for graduates of Egyptian universities

- 1- Must be Muslim, and have memorised the Holy Qur'an with the ability to recite it according to the rules of tajwid. An understanding of its meaning and exegesis is also required.
- 2- Age must not exceed 30 years.
- 3- Examinations will take place on Friday, 6 March 1998, 8.00am, at the Zakat Fund's headquarters on T1st El-Gabal St., Zaytoun.
- 4- Awards will be given to the top ten contestants.

B) The Faisal Islamic Bank Competition for memorisation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an

- 1- Must be Muslim, and have memorised the Holy Qur'an with the ability to recite it according to the rules of tajwid.
- 2- Age must not exceed 30 years.
- 3- Examinations will take place at the Bank's branches on Friday, 6 February 1998, 8.00am.
- 4- The winner of the first prize on the national level will be awarded LE 1,500. Fifty-five other awards will be given.

C) The Imam Mohamed El-Ahmedi Memorial Prize for memorisation of half of the Holy Qur'an

- 1- Must be Muslim and have memorised half of the Holy Qur'an from juz' 16-30.
- 2- Age must not exceed 15 years.
- 3- Examinations will take place at the Bank's branches on Friday, 6 February 1998, 8.00am.
- 4- Winner of the first prize on the national level will receive LE 800. Fifty-five other awards will be given.

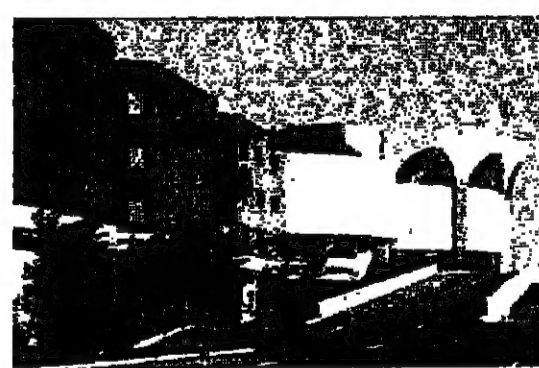
D) Incentive award for memorisation of one-fourth of the Holy Qur'an

- 1- Must be Muslim and have memorised one-fourth of the Holy Qur'an.
- 2- Age must not exceed 12 years.
- 3- Examinations will take place at the Bank's branches on Friday, 6 February 1998, 8.00am.
- 4- The top ten winners at every branch will receive monetary awards.

General rules:

- Entry applications must be turned in to the Zakat Fund's headquarters in Zaytoun at least two weeks prior to the examination dates in the following cities of the Bank's branches: Benha, Tanta, Al-Mahallat Al-Kubra, Damanhour, Alexandria, Suez, Mansoura, Assiut and Sohag.
- Finals for contestants from the top branches will take place on Friday, 6 March 1998 at the Zakat Fund's headquarters in Zaytoun.
- Contestants must not be professional reciters.
- An awards reception will take place at the Bank's headquarters in Tahrir Square, Cairo, at a date to be scheduled.

THE CHANCE to be included is still available; starting from today for one week you can still rent exhibition space in the Sixth Ahrum Computer and Information Technology Exhibition (ACITEX), scheduled from 18-21 February 1998 in Cairo. It is worth mentioning that ACITEX will be held concurrently with the Sixth International Artificial Intelligence Conference.



The Cairo International Conference Centre

Responding to companies' increased demand to rent exhibition space at ACITEX, one of the most successful exhibitions in the field, organisers have opened a limited number of exhibition areas for rent. In coordination with the Cairo International Conference Centre, limited exhibition space will be added to the main exhibition hall in a suitable way that will not block visitors' paths nor the exhibitors themselves.

It is noteworthy that state-of-the-art methods have been taken into consideration and are being employed in organising the exhibition. ACITEX will be held simultaneously with the Sixth International Artificial Intelligence Conference, organised by the Egyptian Computer Association in cooperation with the National Information Committee of the Scientific Research Academy, and the Faculty of Computer Science at Helwan University and the American University in Cairo.

A great number of foreign professors and Egyptian professors residing abroad will attend the exhibition and the conference. Nearly 70 research papers will be presented during the sessions, which will take place at the Press Centre of the Cairo International Conference Centre.

Seminars will also be organised by exhibiting companies interested in presenting and demonstrating their products and services before the public.

Foreign exhibitions will also have a strong showing at the exhibition, including SYSTEMS from Munich, specialised in telecommunications, and CeBIT in Hannover, specialised in computer and information technology. Such foreign exhibitions help put ACITEX on the international map, while demonstrating the Egyptian determination to continue marching in support of the computer and information technology movement.

To reserve exhibition space, please call 3391071, or fax 3941866.

Technical institute to be established

THE MOHAMED Rageb Organisation for Social Development, a non-profit organisation registered with the Ministry for Social Affairs, is establishing a vocational institute, the Alexandria Higher Technical Institute, to train students in different fields of electronics, including computers, data technology, telecommunications and electro-mechanical technology.

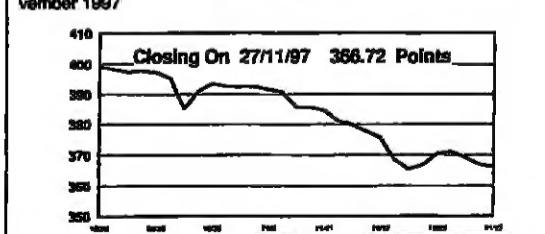
Future training programmes will include management and marketing.

The aim of the institute is to award BSc de-

grees in technological engineering and its branches. The institute accepts applicants with a *thanawiyya 'amma* in science or maths, or equivalents. The institute was established by decree 1103 for 24/9/1997 of the Ministry of Education. Dr. Mohamed Shabana, a professor of electronics at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alexandria and Beirut Arab University, has been appointed dean of the institute, while leading professors of engineering have been selected to teach.

National Bank of Egypt

A weekly update on the NBE Securities Market Index from 20-27 November 1997



The NBE Index has stabilised for this week to register 366.72 points for the week ending 27 November 1997.

4 largest increases and decreases:

Company	Change	Company	Change
Workers Bank	-14.2	Orient Unien and Cotton Co.	+16.3
Nile Pharmaceutical Co.	-12.9	Alexandria Pharmaceutical Co.	+16.7
Suez Canal Bank	-14.8	Al-Watany Bank	+9.8
RAKTA Co.	-7.0	The Arab Drug Co.	+7.1

GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR LARGE COMPANIES OR BANKS

Offering the complete solution...

COMMERCIAL; CUSTOMER SERVICE; AND/OR ADMINISTRATION AREAS

- New distinguished building, ready to use, located on El-Khalifa El-Maamoun Ave., Roxy-Heliopolis, with parking facilities and easy access.
- Luxurious Commercial and/or Customer Service area of 2,000 sq.m. on 3 floors with separate entrance, private staircase and panoramic elevator.
- Optional central air conditioning and selective finished exterior with splendid appearance.
- Possible additional administration areas up to 6,500 sq.m. on 10 floors with large open surfaces.

Please fax no. 3412677/3420869

Al-Ahram Weekly

Netanyahu's jokes

Perhaps it was just lag. But when Eitan Ben-Tsur, the director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry arrived in Cairo earlier this week, he was optimistic that the recent Israeli cabinet meeting had yielded results that would lead to a breakthrough in the peace process in one week.

Netanyahu and the rest of the cabinet had approved a plan for a conditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the West Bank. Although no specific time was set for the troop redeployment, the condition was the same as it has been for the last year or so — a Palestinian Authority crackdown on militants.

The Palestinians rejected the offer — understandably — viewing it as a ploy to keep more territory under Israeli control. They were right.

No sooner had the Israeli cabinet's plan been signed, than Netanyahu's government approved the construction of 900 new homes in the West Bank. These are, of course, the "legal" settlements. Tens of thousands of other settlements are currently being built under a smoke screen "expansion" policy to accommodate Israel's "natural growth".

The aim of this policy, by Israel's own admission, is to make annexing parts of the West Bank easier should the Palestinians decide to unilaterally declare statehood.

Still, Ben-Tsur believed that he had something new, perhaps even revolutionary, to tell Foreign Minister Amr Moussa. Egypt, like the Palestinians, viewed the offer with a mixture of concerned amusement and disapproval.

It is hard to imagine that Netanyahu and the Israeli cabinet believed that anyone would fall for such a ploy. Netanyahu, unfortunately, seems to suffer from an inextinguishable blindness when it comes to politics. While he says that Israel is committed to peace, he turns right around and tells Israelis that they are watching Israel being built (in the settlements).

So what is there left to negotiate on — the cease-fire once this crisis escalates to the level of armed confrontation?

After the disaster of the terrorist attack in Luxor, and its repercussions on the tourist industry, one question was asked more persistently than any other: How should we proceed to promote confidence in our economy and security?

It is certain that this attack was intended to undermine not just tourism but also international confidence in the Egyptian economy. Foreign investments in Egypt, and possibly local investments too, will undoubtedly be affected by the attack.

Terrorism is the plague of many nations. Yet it remains important that in the international arena those countries afflicted by this plague should be seen to be addressing the problem with the necessary seriousness. Regardless of information campaigns and diplomatic moves to restrict the ability of terrorists to operate from overseas, the most efficient course of action to restore international confidence in Egypt is to pursue the development of the domestic economy with, if anything, even greater vigour. Unless we pursue this course, the terrorists will have succeeded in paralysing the national economy.

Ironically, Egypt's recent positive economic indicators were one of the reasons behind the attack. The terrorists were horrified by Egypt's sustained growth and resolved to do everything in their power to prevent economic recovery.

Yet the fact remains that the deficit in the state budget has dropped, foreign currency reserves have soared, and the inflation rate now

Ibrahim Nafie outlines the actions necessary to ensure that the terrorist attack in Luxor does not sour the national economy



stands at between 4 and 5 per cent. It would be a grave error now if we directed our efforts exclusively to reviving tourism. What is required is to maintain, and even speed up, the momentum of our movement in the direction of economic reform. The economic growth rate now, which averages five per cent annually and which is expected to reach 6.9 per cent in 2002, appears to me extremely modest, lacking in ambition and on a par with our resources and the challenges we face, including terrorism.

The terrorist attack in Luxor should not make us lose sight of the strategic objectives we set for ourselves in the past years. And no external or internal force, no matter how vicious its intentions, should be allowed to undermine Egypt's economic ambitions.

When a society achieves a growth rate of 10 per cent, such growth becomes self-sustaining, and is unlikely to be derailed by

such forces. The front line the long battle against terrorism will be, therefore, in the economic sphere, conceding, of course, the need for urgent action in the security, political and information spheres.

In order to make the necessary leap in economic growth we must honestly address the reasons for the modesty of our economic aspirations. In this connection, I believe that the major obstacle obstructing our progress is the slow and expansive administrative system, which is incapable of efficiently promoting growth.

It is surprising that although we are capable of launching mega projects, whether in infrastructure or land reclamation in the Sinai and the southern valley, the administrative system cannot use these projects as a spring board for an economic and social upsurge. As a result, we have a surplus of electric power, a surplus of airport and harbour capabilities and large

amounts of local and foreign money, accumulating in banks. Turning all this into projects, commodities and services proceeds at a much slower pace than should really be the case. Development strategies should be reconsidered. Launching mega projects, in the hope that they will act as the economic locomotive that gets the rest of the economy moving is no longer an adequate approach.

Revolutionising the state's administrative system, as President Mubarak declared in his speech to the People's Assembly and Shura Council, has become imperative. The negligence of duty and security lapses in Luxor have counterparts in other government departments the effects of which we all feel, not only in terms of the commodities and services extended by the state, but also in terms of obstructing the growth of the private sector. And the latter remains content with modest expansion and even more modest technological advances, as it focuses on the domestic market and demands protection. But while conceding that protection is important in the short term, we must also realise that it is not a long term possibility, and cannot be sustained in the face of our partnership agreements with Europe and also our commitments as signatories of GATT.

What is needed, in short, is nothing less than a revolution in the administrative system, the public business sector and the private sector. And with the right changes in each of these sectors, nothing should be able to come between the Egyptian people and their economic aspirations.

Al-Ahram Weekly

Chairman of the Board..... Ibrahim Nafie
Editor-in-Chief..... Hosny Guindy
Managing Editor..... Hani Shukrallah
Assistant Editor..... Wadie Kirolos
Assistant Editor..... Mona Anis
Layout Editor..... Samir Sobhi
General Manager for Advertising..... Hassan Hamdi

Al-Ahram Offices

Main office
Al-Ahram, Al-Ghaza St. Cairo.
Telephone: 57861005/57862005/57863005/57864005/57865005. Direct: 57866054
Telex: 30185/93346 Fax: 5786089/5786683
E-mail: weekly@ahram.org.eg

Overseas offices

USA
Washington DC: Atef El-Ghazali, Al-Ahram Office, Suite 128, 329 National Press Bldg., Washington DC 20045; Tel: (202) 777-2121/2122.
New York: Atef El-Ghazali, Al-Ahram Office, 39th Fl., Chrysler Bldg., 405 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10174-0500; Tel: (212) 972-6446; Telex: 977 9426 ITT U.I.; Fax: (212) 236 0285.
Los Angeles: Samir Sobhi, Al-Ahram Office, 402 S. Curson Ave., 402 LA, CA 90036, USA; Tel: (213) 487-0941; Fax: (213) 487-7084.

Russia
Moscow: Abdel-Malek Khalil, Al-Ahram Office, Kanazovskiy Pro Dm 74, Kv. 50, Moscow; Tel: 243 4014/243 1424; Fax: 230 2879.

Canada
Montreal: Mustafa Samy Sadek, Al-Ahram Office, 800 Rene-Levesque Blvd., West Suite 2440, Montreal H3B 0X9, Quebec; Tel: (514) 876 7823; Fax: (514) 876 9329/514 876 7823.

United Kingdom
London: Amr Abdel-Samir, Al-Ahram Office, 203 - 209 North Gower Street London NW1 2NU
Tel: 0171 388 1155; Fax: 0171 388 3130

France
Paris: Sherif El-Shoubashy, Bureau Al-Ahram 26, Rue Marbeuf, 75008 Paris; Tel: (11) 57 27700; Al-Ahram F: Fax: (11) 428-93963.

Germany
Frankfurt: Mohamed Elisei El-Sharkawi, Al-Ahram Bureau Friedrichstr. 15, 60323 Frankfurt; Tel: (069) 9714309/069 9714381 Fax: (069) 728571.

Austria
Vienna: Mustafa Abdalla, 2331 Vösendorf Orts Str. 253; Tel: 692968/694805; Tel: 11 2735 GIGI Al: Telefax: 694805.

Greece
Athens: Abdel-Azim Darwish, 69 Solonias St., Third floor, Kolonaki 105-79, Athens, Greece; Tel. and Fax: 3634503.

Japan
Tokyo: Mohamed El-Dessouki, Duke Aoyama 4-11, Higashi 4 - Chome Shiba-ku, Room 402, Tokyo; Tel: (03) 340 63944; Tel: (03) 340 6623

Italy
Rome: Mustafa Abdalla (S.A.B. 2000) 00191 ROMA-V, Guido Banti, 34, Tel: 3332250 Fax: 3332294

Brazil
Rio de Janeiro: Ahmed Sherif, Cx. Postal 2395, CEP. 20001.

South Africa
Johannesburg: Mohamed Sabreen, Oxford Manor, 196 Oxford road - Northland 2116, Johannesburg; Tel and Fax: (011) 4477425.

Annual Subscription Rates

Egypt..... £230.00
Arab Countries..... \$60.00
Other Countries..... \$150.00
Send your subscription order to:
Al-Ahram Subscriptions Department,
Al-Ghaza St. Cairo, Egypt.
Subscription payments can be made directly in cash or by cheque to the same address.

Name.....
Mailing Address.....

Newsstand Rates Overseas

Australia	\$4.8	Lebanon	1000 Liras
Austria	\$4.8	Malta	25 Cents
Bahrain	\$4.8	Morocco	\$2.00
Canada	\$5	Muscat	200 Rials
Cyprus	75 Cents	Oman	200 Rials
Denmark	12 Kroner	Qatar	200 Rials
France	8 F	Saudi Arabia	200 Rials
Germany	DM 3.8	South Africa	10 Rand
Greece	Dr 300	Switzerland	5 F
Holland	Fl 12.50	Syria	2000 Liras
Hungary	40 Cents	Tunisia	71,000 Dinars
India	Rs 2000	Turkey	10,000 Liras
Indonesia	10,000 Rupiah	U.A.E.	4 Dirhams
Jordan	400 Fds	United Kingdom	75 Pence
Kuwait	200 Fds	United States	\$ 1.5
		West Bank	50 Cents
		Yemen	10 Rials

Al-Ahram Weekly



Advertising
Direct: (202) 3391071
Fax: (202) 5786023-5786126
Telex: 92002-93345
Marketing
Direct: (202) 5786078
Fax: (202) 5786833-5786089

Battling on many fronts

A more hands-on role for Europe

With the peace process faltering and radicalisation growing throughout the Middle East, Mohamed Sid-Ahmed argues that there is a more hands-on role for Europe

I was recently invited to a seminar in Athens on "Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation: problems and prospects". Because of previous commitments, I was unable to attend; instead, I sent a paper with a few ideas I believe relevant in the light of recent critical developments throughout the region. This is a summary of my presentation:

1. The recent showdown between Iraq and the United States over UNSCOM inspections of arms sites in Iraq has brought about a subtle shift in the dynamics of the political game as it has been played in the Middle East since the second Gulf War. Following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the US has been calling all the shots in the Middle East. But Baghdad's recent rebellion brought an end to this monopoly, as the crisis was defused thanks to an initiative from Moscow, not from Washington. The US is trying to appear as though it still has the final word, even resorting to guest diplomacy to drive the point home. But Washington cannot deny that Moscow's intervention was instrumental in overcoming the crisis. And it is expected that when the dust settles the focus will be on how to remove — or relax — the sanctions (provided Baghdad complies with Security Council resolutions) rather than on compelling the Iraqi regime to comply with Washington's wishes. It can therefore be said that the game in the Middle East is no longer a bipolar one with the US as the unique pole, but is gradually becoming multipolar, thus introducing a new rationale.

2. In the Security Council, France and China support the Russian, rather than the American position. In general, Mediterranean countries believe the Iraqi problem must be addressed more in terms of alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people than of giving precedence to unfinished business with the Iraqi regime. Now that Washington has proved incapable of resolving critical Middle East crises on its own, Europe must step in vigorously. The Euro-Mediterranean space is vital in this respect.

3. The Arab-Israeli peace process has reached an unprecedented low. The boycott of the Doha economic conference by major Arab states, including the moderates among them that are friendly to Washington, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco, betrays a serious credibility

crisis. The series of Middle East economic conferences with Israeli participation, first initiated in Casablanca, then followed on an annual basis in Amman, Cairo and now Doha, are seen as part and parcel of the Madrid peace process and cannot be envisaged independently from progress on the key "land-for-peace" tradeoff. But although the peace process is now totally stalled on all tracks, including the key Israeli-Palestinian track, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright insisted that the Doha conference be held on schedule. To compel parties to send high-powered delegations, she decided to attend the conference herself. As it turned out, she was the highest ranking personality at the conference. The Doha fiasco is yet another indication of Washington's inability to steer the course of events in the Middle East.

4. The failure of the Doha conference must not be allowed to spill over into the Arab world's economic relations with other economic groupings, most notably the European Union. With Euro-Mediterranean cooperation becoming more pertinent than ever, Greece is ideally placed to promote trans-Mediterranean relations. It is important in this respect not to make Euro-Arab relations a function of progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Improving relations between the Arab world and Europe across the Mediterranean basin should become an objective in its own right, regardless of developments in the peace process. This argument should be taken even further. It is only when Europe displays a serious intention to develop its relations with the Arab world outside the scope of the peace process, that is, without regard to the rate at which the Arabs "normalise" relations with Israel, that politicians like Netanyahu will think twice before sabotaging progress in the peace process.

5. With Washington's inability to ensure progress in the peace process through its exclusive sponsorship, it is worth reassessing the European role in this field. So far, the European Union has chosen to remain on the sidelines, whether because it is not yet an integrated sovereign entity while the United States of America is, or because Israel insists on American, not European sponsorship. Since his appointment as European envoy to the peace process, Miguel

Moratinos has been careful not to antagonize any party and has kept a low profile, announcing that his role was to complement that of the US, not to compete with it.

But I think Europe has a more specific role to play, not least because the persecution of Jews in Europe was a key factor in the creation of the state of Israel and hence in the onset of the Middle East crisis. Europe could set itself the task, for example, of inducing each of the two sides to acknowledge the suffering of the other — the Arabs by recognising the sufferings of the Jews in history, particularly in Europe during the first half of this century; the Israelis by acknowledging the sufferings of the Palestinians and understanding their plight and grievances. In other words, to get each side to perceive the other as a subject, not an object, of history.

But how to expect the Arabs to do this when the Europeans themselves have not done enough in this field? Have the Europeans convinced the Jews that there will never be another Holocaust? Until they do, Israel will remain locked in a siege mentality, a haven for all Jews that will never become a "normal" state, with the result that Palestinians will continue to be deprived of their normal, human and national rights. This is a key cultural and ethical field that only Europeans can help solve. The European Union as a whole assumes historical responsibility in this field.

6. When it comes to bilateral relations between Greece and Egypt, I will not have much to add to what others will be saying on Cyprus. But one specific field of mutual security is vis-à-vis the present military cooperation and strategic alliance between Israel and Turkey, rightly apprehended by both our countries. This must not be envisaged exclusively as of Egyptian-Greek interest, but has implications for the entire eastern Mediterranean.

More generally, with the failures and weaknesses of American diplomacy, the Barcelona process must be solidly boosted. Otherwise, confrontation across the Mediterranean will acquire the features of Huntington's "clash of civilisations" theory, that is, a clash between the Judeo-Christian and the Islamic worlds. A forerunner of that threat has appeared not only in Algeria, but even in the recent Luxor massacre in Egypt.

No celebrations

By Naguib Mahfouz

This year, I will not celebrate my 86th birthday. One reason is that neither my family nor any of the members of my generation are accustomed to celebrating birthdays, and I have dissuaded my friends from planning any festivities this year. It is not the time for celebrations; they would only be in bad taste. I should thank all those who have considered this possibility; but my decision is final. I will not celebrate until this country has been cleansed of evil.

Overcoming the shock and trauma of the massacre in Luxor at the personal level requires that each of us work it out alone. Transcending the horror requires will-power and long introspection. At the national level, we must work harder, step up production, and once the security gaps are tightly closed, launch a massive effort to boost development, particularly in Upper Egypt. This effort must produce an impact many times greater than the ripples created, that bloody Monday morning, in the courtyard of the Hatshepsut Temple. Poverty and unemployment, both of which are widespread in Upper Egypt, are the breeding ground for terrorism.

Why have we not given adequate attention to this part of our country? We should multiply incentives for development projects targeting Upper Egypt. Given that up to 10 years in tax holidays are granted investors, incentives for projects in Upper Egypt or impoverished rural areas should be greater, for example 20 years. May this sad experience be an impetus for us to pour our efforts into Upper Egypt, and seek to put things in order for its population.

Based on an interview by Mohamed Salmany.

The Press This Week

Al-Mussawari: "I realise that there are those who believe that the required cure for the present situation is more than a security confrontation; that what is required is a heightened awareness among the political parties and the men of religion, saving youth from unemployment, pressing ahead with development programmes in Upper Egypt and conducting a cultural revolution which would undermine the thinking of the fundamentalist groups. What I would like to emphasise, however, is that the urgent objective of the terrorist groups is to prevent Egypt from achieving these goals and to wreck everything accomplished so far by the people. This is why we must concentrate our efforts to prevent a mercenary minority from ruining the future of a nation which has chosen the right path." (Makram Mohamed Ahmed, 28 November)

Al-Wafdi: "If the Deir El-Bahari massacre has sent our heads spinning, it has also alerted us to the shortcomings of our security. But we would be deluding ourselves if we imagined that our shortcomings were limited to matters of security. What is far more serious is the lopsided political system which has led one political party, identifying itself with the president of the republic, to monopolise politics and stultify the movement of the Egyptian people, in all their political parties, syndicates and groups. The first step on the road to rectifying the situation must be for the president to withdraw from political party leadership, thus allowing the legitimate political parties to compete freely for the confidence of the people — this is what happens in the more advanced democratic nations. In this way we will be pulling the carpet from under the feet of the terrorist groups and all those who oppose democracy." (Gamal Badawi, 29 November)

Akhbar El-Yomi: "There is a school of thought which says that the Luxor massacre was a foreign conspiracy to punish Egypt for its recent political stances. While this is not to be dismissed outright, it aggrandises Israel to an extent far greater than its true size. In the past, we have given greater credit to Israel than it deserves, through our own gross mistakes, and this must stop. To take one example,

Luxor lessons

Hatshepsut Temple was devoid of a security presence and anyone could have carried out the crime without recourse to prior or foreign planning. And if Israel was behind the crime, where were our security forces? The investigations which have been carried out into security shortcomings make it the same whether agents, terrorists or thugs perpetrated the crime. Why do we not admit our gross mistakes? Why do we always inflate Israel to a size greater than it is? Is it to cover up the grossness of our errors?" (Ahmed Ragab, 29 November)

Al-Arabi: "We now have a situation where the will of the people is unified in a unique manner over terrorism and we can do one of two things: either let the opportunity go, as we always do, or to seize the opportunity to bring about real reform. This would require a dialogue between all national political forces, free elections and a new People's Assembly, a vigorous government and a comprehensive political vision of building the Egypt we would like to see materialise, an Egypt capable of dealing with both internal and external challenges. Let us hope that we shall not let the opportunity slip away. If we lose all the tourist revenue but gain national unity and start down the path of true reform, we will be the winners." (Galal Aref, 1 December)

Al-Ahram: "Those who accuse Mossad of the Luxor massacre are indirectly defending the terrorist groups by trying to exonerate Islam from such a crime. This view prevents us from taking serious action against the terrorist groups who hide behind religion. Our main aim is to prove that the Luxor crime was not the work of Mossad and that responsibility lies with the terrorist groups. Israel definitely stands to gain if tourism in Egypt is hit, but Israel usually stands to gain from any catastrophe hitting the Arabs and the Muslims, who are normally capable of inflicting disasters upon themselves without any outside help." (Abdel-Azim Hamad, 1 December)

Compiled by Hala Saqr



If Sudan was a painter, then Dr John Garang would be his magnum opus. His eyes are exceptionally expressive. I decided to insert a third eye in his irregularly-shaped face, both because his almond pupils move, and to give an idea of the pace at which his heart, too, is the reflection of a hard life on the battlefield, rather than an offshoot of extreme piety. His finger, raised as if to admonish his listeners, or draw their attention to an extremely important point, marks his vow to bring down the Islamist regime in Khartoum.

Close u
Salama A. Salama
Bring out
the old

Close up

Salama A. Salama

Bring out the old

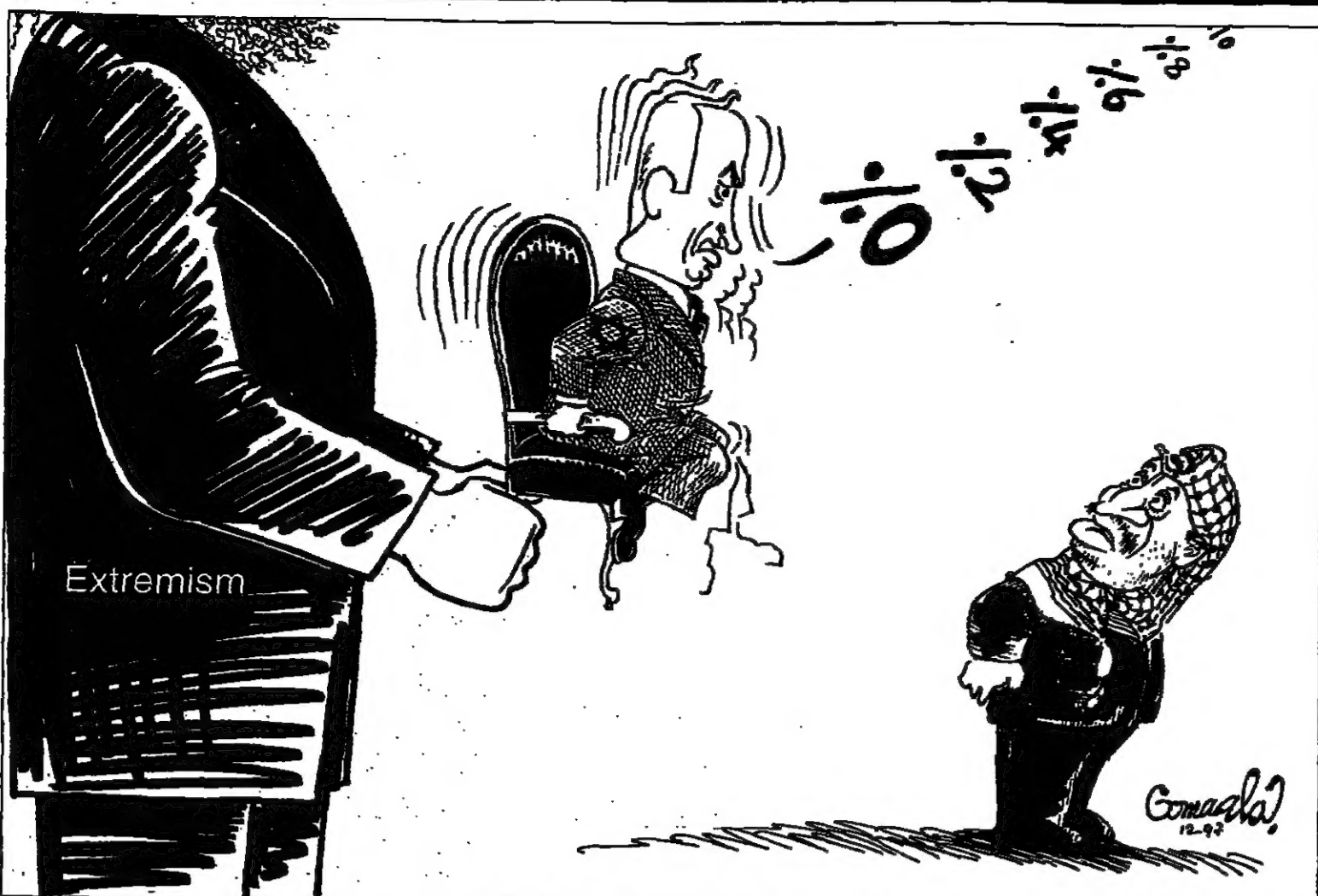
Since the peace process in the Middle East began to crumble in the wake of the Likud victory, the region has become a test tube for diplomats and politicians. Visits to the region are the order of the day. Hardly a week passes without a high-ranking European official's visit. The dignitaries who range from state ministers and foreign ministers to heads of state, stop over in Cairo, Amman and Tel Aviv, then cross over to Gaza to meet with the chairman of the Palestinian Authority. At times, they have enough time and energy to visit Damascus and Saudi Arabia as well.

Yet the political and diplomatic outcome of this flurry of activity has been a reiteration of the obvious: Israel is no longer committed to Oslo or other agreements, and Netanyahu's government is reneging on its responsibilities. These statements are punctuated by warnings that the peace negotiations must be resumed in a way consistent with international law and the land-for-peace principle. All the European officials who have visited the region — whether their countries have a history of active involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, or have little influence on the course of events — have confirmed what everybody knows.

Members of the European Union, whose countries bear a considerable part of the economic burden of the peace agreements, cannot but seize every opportunity to take stances or express views (which, however, must comply with US positions and Israeli transience). They are aware that the collapse of the peace endeavours and the renewal of armed conflict between Israel and the Arabs would harm European interests in the region. Europe's repeated attempts to work with the US on resolving the crisis have met only violent resistance and Israel's categorical rejection. If Europe is unable to exert pressure on Israel, the US is reluctant to do so and Russia is playing it safe, therefore, where are the international guarantees set down during the Madrid Conference? The glamour of this early phase has long since grown tarnished and tawdry.

While verbal support is heaped on the Palestinians, and ecstasy fills Arab leaders every time a statement or communiqué is issued by some European official, however, agreements are still concluded with Israel for closer economic, political or military cooperation. Right after Netanyahu announced his enunciated proposal for conditional, restricted withdrawal from the West Bank, not specifying the extent of the withdrawal or any timetable, preparations to conclude a partnership agreement and to establish a free-trade area with Israel, second only to that with the US, were already underway in Europe.

While Europe has virtually no means of bringing pressure to bear on Israel, except in the domain of economic cooperation, EU countries have so far refrained from exercising any economic leverage. In contrast, Europe has been prompt to exercise economic pressure on Iran, Iraq and Libya. EU reactions, therefore, come as no surprise: they are limited to comments, condemnation, censure or encouragement. Meanwhile, no effective initiative is taken on the ground. Words make no difference in the course of events in the region. The Arabs must take this into account.



Ibn Khaldun's legacy

The true contributors to human civilisation have been ignored for too long. Anouar Abdel-Malek proposes a remedy

Time is a traitor. What we assume to be a bedrock of certainty evaporates into mist.

The new world order, which, in 1991, I termed the new international criminal order — although some accused me of exaggeration — has begun to reveal its true face. With every passing day, this order is growing increasingly relentless and strident, as more and more events indicate that 'unipolar' globalisation, centring around its American-Zionist axis, has entered a critical phase, maliciously opposing any party that challenges it or even attempts to restore an element of moderation.

Against this strained background, President Hosni Mubarak, in the name of the Egyptian people, stood before Parliament on 15 November and declared, "Our goal is to build the Egypt of the future. The future is our first priority. Egypt is equipped to make a significant cultural transition." Underscoring the spirit that would guide this transition, he added, "We must seize every opportunity for progress as we live in an age dominated by the force of economics, the power of science and the hegemony of great (political-economic) entities."

In other words, Egypt's future depends upon challenging the momentous historical movement that is currently determining the features of the world to come. In spite of many hardships and setbacks, Egypt has begun to summon the spirit which emanates from the "genius of place", and to resume its historical place.

But the centre of global power cannot tolerate this. The Egyptian will must be crushed. Egypt challenged the centre of hegemony by condemning its policy of aggression against Iraq. Egypt rallied opposition to economic and political dependency and thwarted the Doha summit. It reaffirmed its determination to play an active role in formulating the new world during recent official visits to Russia and southeast Asia. No wonder, then, that Egypt has become a target.

It was easy to exploit breaches in national security and latent animosities. The massacre in Luxor, at the foot of the great symbols of ancient Egyptian glory, are sufficient proof. Salah El-Din Hafez has spoken of "the Zionist missionary campaign of provocation in the US, backed by Israel, which paved the way for the US Foreign Affairs Committee report alleging that Christian minorities are persecuted in Arab and Islamic countries." This campaign, in turn, engendered the climate that fosters extremism.

Against this grim background, we must concentrate on reaffirming ethical, spiritual, societal and political values that, alone, can generate the basis for the mobilisation of the vast majority of peoples and nations toward a re-awakening of Eastern civilisation in order to counteract oppressive hegemony and pervasive nihilism. As a symbol of this goal, I propose the establishment of an international Ibn Khaldun award for the future of human civilisation.

This honour could be bestowed upon individuals engaged in pioneering activities and ideas that contribute to the process of formulating a new world. They must contribute towards the creation of a world capable of rejecting the nihilism, racism, title commercialism and terrorism that characterise the deep-rooted contempt of the American-Zionist hegemonic entity for the peoples and cultures of the world.

Although many international awards already exist, such as the Nobel prize, which allegedly rewards new inventions and discoveries, reality is not so straightforward as one might believe. Various regional prizes also focus specifically on advances in science and technology. The Ibn Khaldun award, however, would be of a different order — something entirely new. It would be international in the true meaning of the word, not based on regional affiliation or specific disciplines. The Ibn Khaldun award would promote all new and original endeavours contributing to a new enterprise in human civilisation, one that transcends the aggressive, supremacist values of the current order. This prize will emanate from the peoples, cultures and nations of the rising East, which have long been deliberately disregarded in accordance with the prevalent "rationale of monopolisation."

The Ibn Khaldun prize will make it possible to promote the contributions of all nations of the contemporary East, without exception, to human culture in general. As such, it will serve as a means to effect a qualitative transfer in the centre of historical gravity toward the East, and thus to reactivate the spirit of initiative among the diverse peoples, cultures and nationalities around the world.

Why does the world need a new international prize? After all, many Eastern scientists and writers have been Nobel laureates. The list of Nobel laureates since the award's inception, however, reveals that over 60 per cent were from the US alone. In addition, one realises that most of these prizes were awarded in fields which could contribute to the consolidation of Western economic and political supremacy.

What about those who have been instrumental in formulating contemporary world civilisation? Where is the great French poet and critic Louis Aragon honoured? Who has paid tribute to the "Star of the East", Umm Kalthoum; the Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa; General Giap, who liberated Vietnam from two colonialist wars and brought peace to southeast Asia; or Fernando, the great Brazilian development economist? How can the West justify its failure to acknowledge the contribution to the human heritage made by Joseph Needham, who compiled the encyclopedia on the Science and Civilisation of China in 25 volumes, as large as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*? Where are the laurels laid at the feet of Mexican artist Diego Rivera, Lee Quun Yu, the founder of the Confucian revival, and Che Guevara, the protagonist of contemporary revolutionary romanticism?

The list of people who have not been honoured despite the indelible marks they have made on human civilisation is endless. This is why the world needs the Ibn Khaldun award: so that mankind can pay due respect to the greatest possible number of pioneers in the advancement of human civilisation as a whole, without discrimination. The award will allow us to recognise the contributions of the civilisations of the East, notably the Chinese, Asian, Islamic, African, and Latin American spheres.

The invitation to establish such an award should have been proffered at an international forum, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab League or the Organisation of Latin American Nations. International circumstances, at the end of the 20th century, are such that the challenges to the current international order and the path to the future are contingent upon the revival of the Asian and Islamic spheres. These same circumstances are the reason why the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which will meet in Tehran on 5 December, coincides with the inception of a "new Silk Road" between East and West, passing through the Arab/Islamic world. This is why, for this new and necessary international prize, I have proposed a name that symbolises scholastic, intellectual, scientific and social achievement in the name of all humanity, in honour of Abdel-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, the universally renowned historian and chronicler, and the father of sociology.

Ibn Khaldun is the author of the concept of *asabiya*, a concept that translates in contemporary terms as the spirit of national unity and social solidarity based on faith, justice and autonomy. This name could not be more appropriate to the circumstances and the aspirations of the Oriental world today. It heralds the return of the Eastern civilisations to their central place in human history, after a four-century period of marginalisation and neglect. If Ibn Khaldun were to return today, how would we explain our current state of weakness and disintegration? Yet, at the same time, his theory of history and *asabiya* gives us cause for optimism, for it explains the rise — and ultimate decline — of nations.

The writer is an expert in military and strategic affairs at the Cairo-based Centre for Middle East Studies.

Now (or never) is the time

Future perspectives on the strategic and political fronts: Ahmed Abdel-Halim suggests a programme for renewal

The radical changes which have occurred on the regional and global scene in the past 25 years make it imperative for the Arab world to find a suitable role for itself today. The Arabs' recent experiences may have forged a historical pattern which will determine the course of their lives in the future. Such experiences include the October War, the Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreements, the Camp David Accords, Madrid and Oslo, as well as the first Gulf War, the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, and the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

The faltering negotiations for a peaceful settlement between Israel and its Arab partners, the minimal victories scored by the Arabs, the acute crises and attempts to set up initiatives for economic cooperation with Israel (with no corresponding progress in security and political initiatives): all these are sufficient motives for the Arabs to pause and consider a new political and strategic perspective. The situation is further compounded by inter-Arab disputes, which at times have escalated to armed combat, and the Turkish-Israeli alliance, which poses a direct threat to the Arab region and to the Middle East in general.

In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel, backed by US might, represents a special case as far as Egypt and the other Arab countries are concerned. Israel is a clear political, economic and military challenge. The Israeli economy is directly linked to its military, political and strategic goals. This solid economic base, built not on natural resources, but mainly on the economic and financial assistance it receives, has enabled the country to achieve political, strategic, military and technological supremacy over the Arab parties, fragmented and torn as they are.

Israel has been successful in mobilising and organising the resources of its society, exploiting international support, and mustering all its scientific and technological capabilities to establish and nurture its supremacy over its Arab neighbours. Israel has therefore been able to project a positive image at the regional and global levels; whereas the image given by Arab societies is still riddled with doubts and uncertainties. In practical terms, the public face that Israel shows the international community has enabled it to establish a network of economic, and consequently political, international relations, which all reflect positively on Israel's position in the Middle East, to the detriment of the Arabs.

Culture provides the overall framework for this situation, since culture determines identity in the final analysis. The Arab-Israeli conflict is primarily a cultural conflict. This role needs to be profoundly examined, if we are to identify the potential strengths of the Arab position. We need to ask ourselves: What is the Arab strategy in addressing issues of vital concern?

How do we deal with problems emerging from the present situation on the ground, in light of the political and diplomatic manoeuvres of Israel and the US? How are we to react to the new alliances being established in the Middle East? How can we confront the religious foundations of the Israeli state, which have sparked off various forms of terrorism in the region? It is imperative, first of all, to assert Arab political and economic leadership and to prevent our enemies from getting the upper hand.

The toughest challenge, for the Arabs, is to resist involvement in every single one of the many events which rock the region. We must not succumb to this whirlpool of events, since passivity can only deepen the differences between us; nor should we withdraw from international and regional affairs, leaving the field open to Israel. We must maintain a high level of involvement in international and regional affairs. We must intervene in the context of a new pan-Arab national order which will guarantee our rights and provide the optimum conditions for the realisation of our objectives. In this way, we can resume our active role in the Middle East. Economic reform can acquire new momentum. The Arabs must act on the assumption that they are regional leaders, with a positive role to play in regional and international affairs. This is the very essence of the lesson we must learn from the series of crises which our region has faced.

We need to draw our guidelines from basic values, rather than random policies. One of the new challenges facing us all is the cycle of traditionalism which has pulled us back to where we are today. We must remain aware of the fact that the Arab world is not in a vacuum; it is situated within a larger global entity and, as such, must interact with the rest of the international community. The Arabs today face a host of challenges on all sides. We must move toward well-defined objectives, maintain a central role in the region and translate this role into direct economic, political, cultural and social benefits for the Arab peoples.

Egypt's role is of particular importance. Its impact on the world order and the Arab region derives from the effectiveness of its role within the Arab context. Egypt — and, for that matter, any Arab country — expands and intensifies its role when it identifies with the Arab consensus. It is not in Egypt's interest, nor in the interest of any Arab country, to permit the Arab status quo to persist. A restructuring of inter-Arab relations on the basis of new principles is necessary. The question of Egypt's "Arab identity" was unequivocally settled by Mubarak upon his accession to power: "Egypt is Arab by its very destiny, and is indeed honoured to be so... Egypt's relation to the Arab nation is that of the part to the whole... the bonds are reinforced by religion, geography, history, civilisation and shared hopes and fears." The nature and limits of Egypt's Arab role are not subject to choices or ideological inclinations, but, rather, result from the interaction of numerous factors at the national and regional levels, in addition to the variables at play within the new world order.

Arab unity and solidarity have been through various phases; but since the eruption of the second Gulf War, discord and fragmentation, the erosion of the Arab League (the institutional structure of the Arab order) and the escalation of disputes between Arab countries have become the rule. The situation on the Arab scene is reflected in the functioning of the Arab League. At the same time, interest in and concern for Arab causes are lost in the maze of petty domestic squabbles. This situation has allowed Israel and the US to dabble freely in the affairs of the region. Their freedom of action is further consolidated by the US's direct military presence in the Middle East in general, and in the Arabian Gulf in particular.

By cooperating with the other Arab nations, Egypt was able to play an important role in the Arab region. It focused on bringing the Arabs together over vital issues. Such a role was essential, given the determined endeavours being made to fragment the Arab region and extinguish Arab hopes for a better future. Egypt's role was reflected in concrete decisions and actions, taken with conviction, force and vigour. Egypt's policy is characterised by a marked realism, a wise decision if Arab unity is to enable us to address the risks and challenges of the future.

Egypt's political discourse reveals the various axes around which government policy revolves. The main axis is Egypt's contribution to the security of the Arab nation, in fostering Arab solidarity and settling the Palestinian problem through a political solution acceptable in the present historical contingency. Egypt exercises this role in the diplomatic sphere through a network of effective relations, clear-cut plans for Arab security, well-defined objectives. In this respect, it must take into account available Arab resources and capabilities. Egypt is also striving to halt the collapse of the entire Arab order, consolidate consensus as

well as conceptual, economic and military integration and coordinate the various Arab security systems. For a collective Arab role to be effective, Arab objectives must be defined carefully, while tasks and responsibilities must be distributed among the Arab countries in accordance with their respective capabilities. Our commitments must be honoured; the fundamental threats to our security must be identified; and the mechanisms for settling disputes and mending regional relations must be established.

When the Arabs are in agreement, there is no limit to what we can achieve. When we are divided, we give our enemies a chance to step in and wreak havoc. Arab resources and capabilities are distributed among all the Arab countries. No single country enjoys a monopoly over certain resources; nor do the Arab states, alone, qualify for entrance to the new century, characterised by the prevalence of massive economic and political blocs. Arab solidarity, therefore, is not an ideological but a strategic imperative. Efforts to this end must be backed by economic and technological capabilities, not to mention military coordination. In the final analysis, then, a collective stance is necessary to address regional problems. Disparities in effectiveness and capabilities could make the question of collective leadership seem absurd; but the fact remains that a common Arab strategy is crucial. A unified Arab leadership could work out the optimum distribution of roles and thus contribute most effectively towards the resolution of the Arab crisis.

The concept of unity, however, needs to be universally accepted in the Arab region. If this acceptance is to be gained, unity must integrate the differences and disparities between the Arab states, each of which should refrain from intervening in the others' domestic affairs. Unity must comprise economic and developmental as well as cultural, political and social dimensions.

As Arabs, our future strategic effectiveness is in our hands. Can we mobilise our societies and bring about political, strategic and technological change? Can we identify foreign policy challenges and establish a list of priorities? We must be prepared for the full impact of globalism: we must take into account the role of culture and civilisation as new determinants in international relations in the future. But above all, statements of Arab solidarity must become effective now.

The writer is an expert in military and strategic affairs at the Cairo-based Centre for Middle East Studies.

Soapbox

Egypt is no Algeria

The wave of violence of the last two decades continues to puzzle most writers and analysts. Some commentators resort to incorrect analogies and oversimplified explanations that only increase confusion. This makes the endeavour to tackle the wave of violence more difficult. One example of incorrect analysis is the belief, prevalent in the West, that the activities of "Islamic extremists" in Egypt will eventually lead to another Algeria, a civil war between the government and the terrorists.

This superficial analogy does not hold. Several basic facts separate Egypt from Algeria. First, the Algerian crisis resulted from a political clash between the government and a well-organised political party that won the majority of votes in free elections, held and supervised by the government itself. In Algeria, those who voted for the Islamic party were expressing their dissatisfaction with the government rather than siding with the FIS.

Second, the vast majority of Egyptians who call for Islamisation of society and strict adherence to Islamic law do not engage in any violent acts. They are peaceful, moderate people.

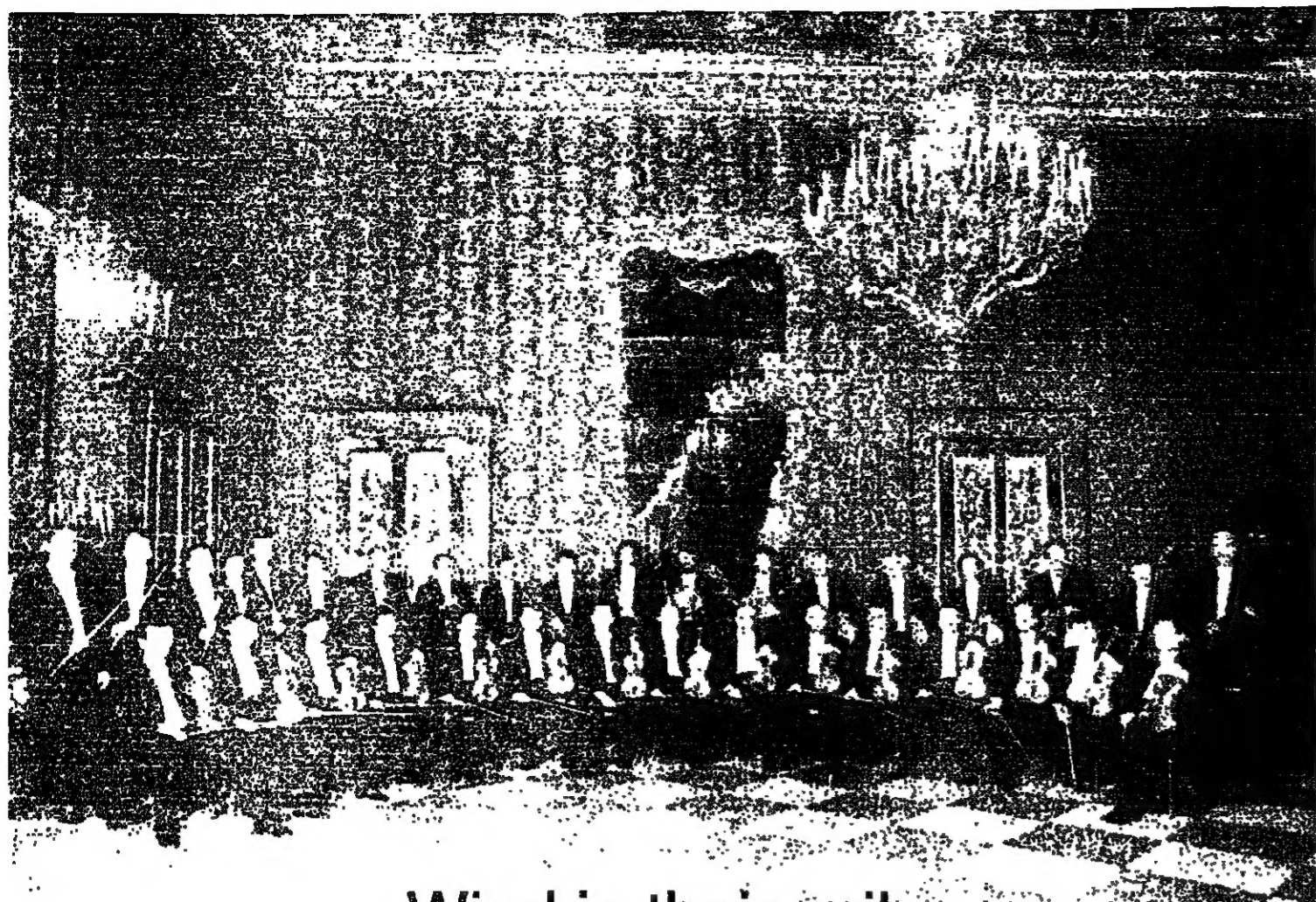
Third, Egyptians of every affiliation agree that the challenges facing Egypt require internal peace and stability and that, regardless of its shortcomings, the regime is genuinely patriotic and basically responsive to the needs of the masses.

Pluralism, diversity of opinion, and uninterrupted dialogue continue to play an alleviating and even a preventive role, immunising Egypt against any possible attack by the Algerian virus.

This week's Soapbox speaker is a writer on Islamic and Arab affairs and a former government minister.



Kamal Abul-Magd



Wind in their sails

HARMONIA PRAGENIS, the wind section of the Prague Chamber Orchestra, will perform on 9 December at Al-Hanager Arts Centre. The repertoire of the orchestra, which was founded in 1951, runs the gamut of the Western tradition. Their concert programmes, while concentrating on the major classical works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, reach back to the High Baroque, with Bach, Handel and Vivaldi, and forward to the Romantics, particularly the music of Schubert and Mendelssohn, while also including items from the present century, including works by Britten, Hon-

egger, Prokofiev and Stravinsky. The orchestra aims, as well, to give wider exposure to many Czech composers, contemporary and non-contemporary. The group are regular performers on the international concert circuit, and count among their number several distinguished soloists. This week's concert is organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

(For full details, see Listings, opposite)

Birds without feathers

David Blake is told not to worry: the feathers come later

Cairo Opera Ballet Company and Cairo Opera Orchestra: *Swan Lake*, director, Abdel-Moneim Kamel; Main Hall, Cairo Opera House: 20 November

How much later? This *Swan Lake* looked very beautiful. All material things about it, the lake, the moonlight on the water, the palaces, grottoes, furnishings, costumes and above all, colours of

his shoulders with the greatest elan. His jumps and turns and tempi are precise, in spite of the slow tempo demanded by the orchestra. The home swans and the waltz of the sovereign princesses progressed through the craggy, old, pure Petipa choreography. The cygnets were larger than usual, grandes dames, Egyptian mother types rather than small white water babies trying out

what's cooking in the lake. Act IV and the lake looks threatening. Odette has not been forgotten. She is under the protection of a mafia bad man who hangs around swan lakes, looking for wealthy queens. Odette and Prince soon fix him. Theirs is the greater, the absolute thing, true love. In some productions the baddie wins the game, the Prince drops dead and the Queen goes back

pleasant, but it is beginning to wear thin, giving signs of sinking out of hearing. Then came Boccherini, *Nocturne del strada di Madrid*. It is catchy, easy and well-worn by the Amadeus. After this, Boccherini again, a Cello concerto with Mahmoud Saleh as soloist.

These bits and pieces, that often make up the mosaic of the mad musical cultural classical world, are open for ridicule. Saleh's cello never grunts, and he played the near, attractively superficial music with elegant ease.

Britten's *Symphony* can sound very different to what was played on this occasion. His music is many-sided, with both dark and light predominating. El-Sisi can conduct this as mostly dark and it becomes too large for this small hall and there is almost the smell of the North Sea about it. In this performance, it was all the one sound — light, jerky, full of little puns which fell flat. The Amadeus, nonetheless, had a standing ovation.

The Fagioli are a celebrated group of very clever singers. Their work is coordination, a fine art in itself. They have two sopranos who can really sing, easy, with good humour and wit, through a large repertoire, with every word clear.

The group sang with great energy, beginning with Hildegard of Bingen pieces, dating from 1179. As a composer she doesn't show her age at all and her hymns to green trees and their purifying effect on the airscapes surrounding mankind are a joy and a warning to hear those consigned to a daily struggle through the daily carbon dioxide jungle. Hildegard, the patron saint of save-our-streets from the gas fogs of now, a priestess of practicality.

Through madrigals and motets we speeded, driven by the sharp, critical talent of the Fagioli and their warm, humorous approach to human frailties. They are like W.C. Fields when they reach our times. There are other ways to laugh besides being malicious. The traditional Scots O my love is like a red, red, rose was deep and truly moving. Their director Robert Hollingworth, and the two sopranos, Mhairi Lawson and Nicola Kennedy, together with basses and counter-tenors and tenor proper, a team which should have had a second concert here to show their variety and versatility were given this one riveting concert.

The Cathy Berberian pieces, she the wife of the Italian composer Berio, are breathtaking.

Their concert ended with their swinging into strange territory. A humorous mix of gentle but lethal observation from the cage where the wonderfully awful Joyce Grenfell sent out her barbs and thrusts into a world gone berserk. Fagioli were an unexpected bonus. They have feathers and can fly.



Fagioli — a happy replacement

And then the dancers. This *Swan Lake* comes at a time when in most other theatres everyone does their own thing. It can even be produced in drag. See, principal dancer, can be a man. And the prince is often a woman. And the swans are notable as birds for their capricious, indefensible characters, so they can settle for anything, and no grumbles.

Cairo swans stick to being birds. Very alluring ones, tall, flowing and imperious. No nonsense and no mannerisms. The production is straight on. If you feel it could be lived up by a bit of academic camp, again, try somewhere else, maybe London.

It is customary these days to give a list of choreographers, from Petipa and on to Abdel-Moneim Kamel. Kamel adds or subtracts here and there, but the structure remains. And it more than suffices. These old classical ballets are so far out of fashion, they slip easily into cabaret, crime, and, as the entire age is on the slips, one twist too many and the director will throw the entire edifice, queens, birds and magic layabouts on to the sidewalk and let the black and white Odettes fend for themselves.

At least, as a dancer, if you have trained in the classical manner, you have the compensation of a longer career on the boards than you would have without it. Two hundred slow grands plies before breakfast toughen you for the jungle of the dance world to come.

The old-fashioned four acts of *Swan Lake* are maintained. From the beginning there was no doubt as to who was in musical control and it was the conductor, Mustafa Nagui. The beat throughout was unbending and without nuance. Doubtful if this inspires dancers, but at least they have something to lean upon which should do as the acts move on. It had dignity, yes, but the forward sweep of the dance, no.

The court clown, Alexander Kiriuk, carries the entire first act on

their first feathers. Act II introduced Erminia Kamel as Odette, whiter than white, doing the great things this bird queen must do. She did them all, the steps were there, but she seemed uneasy. Maybe she missed Gorbachov as her Prince. We, the audience, certainly did. Kamel has her way, like Markova did, of managing the difficult role, but she was out of mood for her usual grand flights.

As for Dimitri Damazirov, we should not be involved with Siegfried's arms. It is his support of Odette, his involvement and amazement at her apparition that matters. The boys in the Conservatoire Ballet know how to go about this romance better than he. Elevation, lacking; the dancing, slow; no musicality. Oh those arms.

Act III presents the entire company. The Prince has had enough of real girls: he wants birds even though swans do bite. There is consternation, all well managed in this stylish production, particularly the mixture of the various diversifications. The entry of Sahar Helmy and the troupe, black slashed with emerald green, is flashing, almost Spanish. And from behind the men's musettes the sex bomb of the evening, the black swan queen danced by Era Prokoponko, darts into the dull royal party.

And so the story goes. Prince is struck dumb while the white queen in the background, dead centre of the lake, loses out to the dark intruder who proceeds to set the party whirling by doing her 32 infamous *fouettés sur place*. But Prokoponko didn't. She ended early. No matter, she wrecked the royal show and the Prince goes off with the boys to see

into the water. Not this time. Stage trap-door opens in front of the mafia man, flames and dry ice envelop him, and he slips down to Hell to join Don Giovanni.

The audience is happy, goes home. The judged of heart are already dead — with boredom. Only balletomanes, dancers, kids and other mad folk of quality are happy.

A British Egyptian Musical Evening: Amadeus Chamber Orchestra: 1 Fagioli group; Small Hall, Cairo Opera House: 23 November

This concert was really feathers without a bird. Because of Laxor, the Guildhall Concert Group, billed for this night, decided that it was better to stay home and allow someone else to come. Someone else did, the Fagioli.

The Amadeus of course performed. The only trouble is that it plays nearly always the same programme.

This night we did not have anything from the *Four Seasons*. But we had stock performances of Albinoni and Boccherini, with Britten's *Simple Symphony*, which is in line for stock treatment also, and, considering the variety the other orchestras of Cairo put before the public, the fare offered by the Amadeus is limited.

The orchestra itself begins to show the lassitude of repetition. It no longer plays with its old flair, even for the hoary perennials presented. And this night's show was decidedly wisp. Why don't they try, at least, the 20th century and dump Boccherini and his sort for a few seasons?

They began with Albinoni — the Adagio. The long, familiar melody soaring over plucked strings was

Listings

EXHIBITIONS

Group Show
Donda Gallery, 20 Abdel-Aziz
Gawish St., Borg El-Arab, Bab
El-Louq, Tel 333 8367, Daily exc
Fri, 12pm-10pm, until 4 Dec.
Over 10 artists exhibit their work
under the title Still Life.

Students of the AUC Plastic Arts
Group
Ewari Gallery, Main Campus,
American University in Cairo, El-
Sheikh Riham St. Tel 337 5436.
Daily exc Fri & Sat, 9am-9pm, Un-
til 4 Dec.

Claire Kersten (Paintings)
Cairo Atelier, 2 Karim El-Dawla
St. Downtown, Tel 574 6730, Daily
exc Fri, 10am-1pm, 6pm-9pm, Un-
til 5 Dec.
Works under the title The Other
Way Round.

Silvia Baechli (Drawings) and
Eric Hattan (Photography)
Espace Gallery, 1 El-Sherif St.,
Downtown, Tel 393 1699, Daily
10am-2pm & 6pm-9pm; Fri 6-
9pm, until 5 Dec.

Wafiq Rifai (Sculpture) and Fa-
rouk Shehata (Paintings)
Espace Gallery, 3 El-Nessim St.,
Zamalek, Tel 346 6293, Daily exc
Sun, 10.30am-2pm & 3pm-6pm,
until 6 Dec.

Italian Drawing in the 1990s
Centre of Arts, 1 El-Mohand El-
El-Sherif St., Zamalek, Tel 340 8211,
Daily exc Fri, 10am-1.30pm &
7.30pm-9pm, until 10 Dec.

Abu Bakr El-Nawawi, Mervat
Rafat & Mohamed Sabry (Paint-
ings)
Salama Gallery, 36/A Ahmed Ora-
bi St., Mohandessin, Tel 346 3242,
Daily exc Fri, 10am-2pm & 3pm-6pm,
until 13 Dec.

May He Live Forever
British Council Gallery, 192 El-
Nil St., Agouza, Tel 301 0319, Dai-
ly exc Fri, 9am-9pm, until 13 Dec.
A display of books, pictures and
drawings, with audio-visual docu-
mentation from the 1920s, re-
lating to the discovery of Tu-
tanhkhamun's tomb and
Egyptology.

Abdoun Bazzi (Sculpture)
Zelnab Khatoun House, behind
El-Azhar Mosque, Tel 340 2287,
Daily exc Fri, 10-9pm, until 14
Dec.

André Gelpke (Photographs)
Goethe Institute, 5 El-Bustan St.,
Downtown, Tel 575 9877, Daily
exc Fri & Sat, 10am-2pm & 3pm-
8pm, until 19 Dec.
Aspects of contemporary photo-
graphy under the title Nostalgia.

Group Show
Faculty of Fine Arts, Zamalek,
until 21 Dec.
Five artists from the Saint-Etienne
Fine Arts Faculty exhibit their
work.

Zelnab El-Sagay (Paintings)
Khan El-Maghraby Gallery, 18
El-Mansour Mohamed St., Zam-
alek, Tel 340 3349, Daily exc Sun,
10.30am-9pm, until 23 Dec.
Works under the title Egyptian
Tales.

Members of the Photo-
graphic Salon of
Egypt
Sony Gallery, Main
Campus, American
University in Cairo,
Mohamed Mahmoud
St. Tel 357 5424, Dai-
ly exc Fri & Sat, 9am-
12pm & 6pm-9pm,
until 23 Dec.

Golo (Cartoons)
Cairo-Berlin Gallery,
17 Youssif El-Ghindi
St., Bab El-Louq, Tel
393 1764, Daily exc
Sun, 12pm-8pm, until
23 Dec.

Les Soixantes
Museum of Modern
Art, Opera
House
Grounds, Giza, Tel
342 0601, Daily exc
Mon, 10am-1pm &
3pm-9pm, until 24
Dec.

Assem Sharaf (Paint-
ings)
Espace Gallery, 1 El-
Sherif St., Down-
town, Tel 393 1699,
Opening 9 Dec, 7pm,
Daily 10am-2pm & 6pm-9pm; Fri
6-9pm. Gathering around the ar-
tist's work 14 Dec, 7pm, until 30
Dec.

Collective Exhibition
Sheba Gallery, 6 Sri Lanka St.,
Zamalek, Tel 340 9192, Daily exc
Sun, 10am-9pm, until 9 Jan.
Jewelry by Saad Razi and Zina He-
mad, textiles by Sylvia Nasrallah
and Michel Pastore, pottery by
Eveline Porras and Suzanne Wissa
Wassaf, and watercolour paintings
and ink drawings by Rana Chahabi.

Museum of Modern Egyptian
Art
Opera House Grounds, Giza, Tel
342 0601, Daily exc Mon, 10am-
1pm & 3pm-9pm.
A permanent display of paintings
and sculpture charting the modern
art movement in Egypt.

Hanbeh We Ne'eb (We'll Love
and Rise Above)
Rivoli II, 26 July St., Downtown,
Tel 573 5053, Daily 1pm, 3.30pm,
6.30pm 8pm & 10pm.
With Farouq El-Fishawi.

Mohamed Nagui Museum
Children's Pyramid, 9 Mahmoud Al-
Ghundi St., Giza.
A museum devoted to the paintings
of Mohamed Nagui (1888-1956).

Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum
Tahrir St., Giza, Daily exc Sun
and Mon, 9am-1.30pm.
Permanent collection of works by
the sculptor Mahmoud Mukhtar.

FILMS

Egyptomania: A Film Series
British Council auditorium, 192
El-Nil St., Agouza, Tel 301 0319,
4 Dec, 6pm: The Ten Command-
ments, directed by Cecil De Mille.
10 Dec, 6pm: The Egyptian, di-
rected by Michael Curtiz.

Universal Laws
Japanese Information and Cul-
ture Centre, 106 Qasr El-Aini St.,
Garden City, Tel 334 9431, 4 Dec,
6pm.
Directed by Kazuyuki Izutsu
(1990).

Italian Films
Italian Cultural Institute, 3 El-
Sheikh El-Marsaf St., Zamalek, Tel
340 8791,
6 Dec, 6pm: Identificazione Di
Una Donna (1962), directed by M.
Antonioni.
7 Dec, 6pm: Oltre Le Nuvole, di-
rected by M. Antonioni.

French Films
French Cultural Centre, 1 Ma-
draset El-Hoqueq El-Feransiya St.,
Mounira, Tel 354 7679,
4 Dec, 7pm: Vieille Canaille, di-
rected by Gérard Jourd'hui.
7 Dec, 7pm: Nelly et M. Arnaud,
directed by Claude Sautet.
10 Dec, 7pm: Nelly et M. Arnaud,
as above.

French Cultural Centre, Heliopolis
cinema, 27 Sabri Abu Alam St., Is-
mailia Sq., Heliopolis, Tel 417
4824,
4 Dec, 7pm: Le Fantôme de la Li-
berté, directed by Luis Buñuel.
10 Dec, 7pm: Danton, directed by
Andrzej Wajda.

Commercial cinemas change their
programmes every Monday.
The information provided is valid
through to Sunday after which it is
wise to check with the cinemas. Ar-
abic films are seldom submitted. For
information, contact the venue.

FaceOff
Tahrir, 112 Tahrir St., Dokki, Tel
333 4726, Daily 1pm, 3pm, 6pm,
9pm; Thur-Sat midnight show, El-
Haram, El-Haram St., Giza, Tel
385 8358, Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm,
6pm & 9pm.
An intelligent and entertaining ac-
tion film with John Travolta and
Nicolas Cage.

Conspiracy Theory
MGM, Kollera El-Nasr Sq., Mo-
di, Tel 352 3066, Daily 10am, 1pm,
3pm, 6pm & 9pm, Radio, 24 Talaat
Harb St., Downtown, Tel 575 6562,
Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm &
9pm. Room 8 Hilton II, Corniche
El-Nil St., Tel 574 7435, Daily
1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm &
midnight.
With Julia Roberts.

My Best Friend's Wedding
Cairo Sheraton, El-Galaa St., Giza,
Tel 360 6081, Daily 10.30am, 1pm,
3pm, 6pm, 9pm & midnight.

Members of the Photo-
graphic Salon of
Egypt
Sony Gallery, Main
Campus, American
University in Cairo,
Mohamed Mahmoud
St. Tel 357 5424, Dai-
ly exc Fri & Sat, 9am-
12pm & 6pm-9pm,
until 23 Dec.

Golo (Cartoons)
Cairo-Berlin Gallery,
17 Youssif El-Ghindi
St., Bab El-Louq, Tel
393 1764, Daily exc
Sun, 12pm-8pm, until
23 Dec.

Les Soixantes
Museum of Modern
Art, Opera
House
Grounds, Giza, Tel
342 0601, Daily exc
Mon, 10am-1pm &
3pm-9pm, until 24
Dec.

Assem Sharaf (Paint-
ings)
Espace Gallery, 1 El-
Sherif St., Down-
town, Tel 393 1699,
Opening 9 Dec, 7pm,
Daily 10am-2pm & 6pm-9pm; Fri
6-9pm. Gathering around the ar-
tist's work 14 Dec, 7pm, until 30
Dec.

Collective Exhibition
Sheba Gallery, 6 Sri Lanka St.,
Zamalek, Tel 340 9192, Daily exc
Sun, 10am-9pm, until 9 Jan.
Jewelry by Saad Razi and Zina He-
mad, textiles by Sylvia Nasrallah
and Michel Pastore, pottery by
Eveline Porras and Suzanne Wissa
Wassaf, and watercolour paintings
and ink drawings by Rana Chahabi.

Museum of Modern Egyptian
Art
Opera House Grounds, Giza, Tel
342 0601, Daily exc Mon, 10am-
1pm & 3pm-9pm.
A permanent display of paintings
and sculpture charting the modern
art movement in Egypt.

Hanbeh We Ne'eb (We'll Love
and Rise Above)
Rivoli II, 26 July St., Downtown,
Tel 573 5053, Daily 1pm, 3.30pm,
6.30pm 8pm & 10pm.
With Farouq El-Fishawi.

MUSIC

Fullbright Benefit Concert
Fullbright Commission Main Of-
fice, 70 Conventin Abul-Mahasen
St., Garden City, Tel 357 2258, 4
Dec, 7.30pm.
American singer Bill Eckenhouse
performs authentic American folk
songs, personal compositions and
Christmas songs.

Arabic Music Ensemble
Small Hall, Opera House, Giza,
Tel 341 2926, 4 Dec, 2pm.
Conducted by Salah Ghobashi.

Cairo Symphony Orchestra
Small Hall, Opera House, as
above, 7 Dec, 8pm.
Compositions by Bartok, Rech-
berger and Beethoven, performed
by the orchestra, along with cello
soloist Mounir Bakla; conducted by
Mustafa Nagui.

Harmonia Pragensis
El-Hanager, Opera House Grounds,
Giza, Tel 340 6891, 9
Dec, 8.30pm.
The wind group of the famous
Prague Chamber Orchestra per-
forms selections from world com-
posers and old Czech masters. For
details, see photo-caption.

Opera Tails
Main Hall, Opera House, as
above, 9, 11, 14, 16 & 18 Dec,
8pm.
The Cairo Opera Company, with
soloists Iman Mostafa, Eugene De-
marchiev, Hassan Kanny, Rada El-
Wakil and Mona Rifa'i perform, un-
der conductor Patrick Fournillier
and director Jean-Louis Pichon.

THEATRE

Ballo (Pantomime)
Madinet Nasr Theatre, Youssif Ab-
bas St., Nasr City, Tel 402 0804,
Daily 8.30pm; Thur 9.30pm.

Tahel El-Tahid (Under Threat)
El-Talia, Ataba Square, Down-
town, Tel 593 948, Daily 9.30pm.

El-Katibi (The Stable)
El-Talia, as above, Daily 8pm.

Zizo Mahboub Zamanoh (Zizo
the Beloved of His Time)
Fleeting Theatre, Adjacent to Uni-
versity Bridge, Manshi, Tel 364
9516, Daily 10.30am.

Alahanda
El-Farid Theatre, El-Brohi Sq.,
Tel 482 3017, Daily 8.30pm, Thur
9.30pm.

Cinderella
Puppet Theatre, Anaba Sq., Tel 591
0954, Daily 6.30pm; Fri & Sun
11am.

El-Zaim (The Leader)
El-Herem Theatre, Pyramids
Road, Hara, Tel 386 3952, Daily
8.30pm; Wed & Thur 10pm.

LECTURES

The Architecture of the Mosque
of Ibn Tulun
Netherlands Institute for Ar-
chaeology and Arabic Studies, 1
Mohamed Arif St., Zamalek, Tel
340 0076, 4 Dec, 5.30pm.
Lecture by Dr Tarek Swe-
lim, American University
in Cairo.

The Art of Theatrical
Spectacle
Italian Cultural Institute, 3 El-
Sheikh El-Marsaf St., Zamalek,
Tel 340 8791, 4
Dec, 6pm.
Lecture by Alfred Farag.
The talk will be followed by
the projection of Al-
exander the Great, directed
by Robert Rossen and star-
ring Barry Jones-Harry.

Tutankhamun and the
Cairo Museum
British Council, 192 El-
Nil St., Agouza, Tel 301
0319, 7 Dec, 6pm.
Lecture by Dr Mohamed
Saleh.

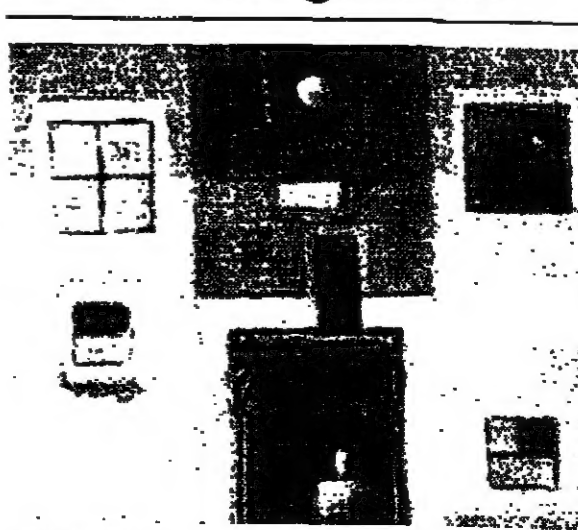
Temples and Churches
of Roman Kellis in Dak-
ka Oasis
Egypt Exploration Society,
British Council, 192 El-
Nil St., Agouza, Tel 301
0319, 8 Dec, 7pm.
Lecture by Dr Colin Hope,
university lecturer in Egypt-
ology, Monash Uni-
versity, Melbourne.

La Politique Future de la Russie
au Moyen Orient
CEDEJ, 14 Dr Abdel-Rahman El-
Sawi St (ex-Gam'iet El-Niri), Mo-
handessin, Tel 361 1932, 9 Dec,
5pm.
Lecture in French by Professor
Alexey Vassiliev, from the Acad-
emy of Science, Moscow.

All information correct at time of
going to press. However, it remains
wise to check with venues first,
since programmes, dates and times
are subject to change at very short
notice.
Please send information to Listings,
Al-Ahram Weekly, Galaa St., Cairo,
Tel 5786064,
Fax 5786069/833.

Compiled by
Inji El-Kashef

Around the galleries



Adel El-Masry

WINDOWS and doorways at
which figures stand dominate
the mixed media paintings of
Adel El-Masry which are on
exhibit at the Art Apprecia-
tion Cultural Palace, Sidi Ga-
ber, Alexandria. A sense of
anxiety, claustrophobia and al-
ienation pervades these voy-
euristic mis-en-scenes.
Ink drawings by Hoda El-
Masry are on show at the At-
elier du Caire. The lines are
fine and precise — certainly
the artist is in control of her
medium. However, the heavy-
handed use of women as sym-
bols (of oppression, social in-
justice, etc) make these draw-
ings too loudly didactic.

Reviewed by Nagwa El-Ashri

سكنا من لامل



The opening ceremony of the 21st round of the Cairo International Film Festival, presided over by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, before a portrait of Saadeddin Wahba.

Absence at the heart

Monday's opening ceremony of the 21st round of the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) turned out, in part, to be a memorial for the late Saadeddin Wahba, the chairman of the festival for 12 years who passed away only a few days before the inauguration.

This gave the supposedly international event a very local atmosphere, so much so that foreign faces were hardly noticeable among the multitude of Egyptians who turned out for the ceremony. Many of the women and actresses were in black — the black of mourning rather than the sequined evening variety. There was virtually no translation. Arabic dominated the evening and those in charge of the event seemed totally oblivious to the presence of foreign guests. But were there any foreign guests?

In fact, foreigners could be counted on the fingers of one hand. All seemed to be present for one very specific task, their role as members of the jury. When they were ushered onto the stage, along with the two Egyptian members, actress Youssra and director Ashraf Fahmy, the Russian Director Vladimir Khotenko, in an attempt to introduce a less sombre note into the proceedings, took the hand of the American critic Beglary Katayoun and began dancing, introducing one of the rare smiles into the event.

The opening ceremony was devoid of the usual dancing tableaux which have been such a feature of previous festivals, and of the zaffa that used to greet the participants in front of the auditorium of the Medinet Nasr Conference Hall.

However, and in spite of the intimate local atmosphere of the 21st round, high ranking dignitaries were conspicuous by their absence. The minister of culture apologised for a last minute cancellation due to illness, delegating Gaber Asfour, chairman of the Supreme Council of Culture, who after conveying the minister's apologies, inaugurated the round, named after the festival's late chairman, and promising that the festival will remain as Wahba had wanted it.



Samiha Ayoub and Gaber Asfour

photo: Mohamed Wassim

The first item in the ceremony was the screening of movie clips of Egyptian monuments from Upper Egypt — where the recent terrorist attack took place — to the sound of operatic passages, all wrapped in special light effects to enhance a mood of sadness and muffled rage.

The opening ceremony this year, and perhaps for the first time in the history of the festival, formed an integral whole, despite the varied nature of its component elements. There were the images of the pharaonic monuments; of Saadeddin Wahba, with his distinctly Egyptian features, who despite his illness had continued supervising the last minute prepara-

tions of the festival, not aware that the opening ceremony would become a forum for his eulogy.

There was a short film about Wahba's life and achievements entitled *Al-Ashgar Tamout Wagifa* (Trees Die Standing), with footage from his life with actress Samiha Ayoub, whom he met and married when she was acting in his 1960s play *Al-Sibinsa* (Third Class), as well as clips from famous Egyptian films such as *Al-Haram* (Sin), *Al-Zawag Al-Thaniya* (The Second Wife), *Abi Fawq Al-Shagara* (My Father Atoop a Tree) — all films scripted by Wahba. When a scene from the film *Zuqag Al-Midaq* (Midaq Alley), based on Mahfouz's novel and Wahba's first ex-

perience of script-writing, was shown, we heard Hussein Riyad's voice saying that everything has an end and this is the end.

Although the two events which gave the opening ceremony its character — the attack on tourists in Luxor and the passing away of Saadeddin Wahba — could not have been anticipated by the director Samir Seif, who was in charge of staging the ceremony, he undoubtedly succeeded in rising to the occasion with dignity. The three films he had prepared before these two events, dedicated to the works and lives of three artists honoured this year, namely Ismail Yassin, Fatin Abdel-Wahab and Zaki Rustom, were not out of tune with the general solemnity of the occasion, introducing a nostalgic note. The three artists all died 25 years ago.

The films showed highlights from some of their memorable works and it was thanks to the skill of Samir Seif that these films, as well as the one dedicated to Saadeddin Wahba, seemed to converge at many moments to show the heyday of Egyptian cinema.

All the applause in the ceremony was for the deceased while all those who stood on the stage seemed to be overshadowed by the presence of the dead. When Saadeddin Wahba's picture was first projected on the stage there was a five-minute standing ovation; again there was a minute of silence in honour of his memory, and when his widow, actress Samiha Ayoub came on the stage, her words were choked with tears. Saadeddin Wahba was the absent centre of the whole ceremony.

It is certainly a coincidence, though not devoid of meaning, that the film chosen to open the festival — *Evlia* — begins and ends with a funeral. The first, that of Eva Peron's father, is a modest funeral of a poor man; the last is that of the legendary Eva who has risen from the abyss to the height of power. Though the film is a musical, with all the paraphernalia that comes with the genre, there were very eloquent moments and a searing political commentary on the nature of dictatorships. It was unfortunate that Alan Parker, the director of the film who was to head the jury, declined his invitation to the festival. He certainly succeeded in making Madonna, who 10 years ago was voted worst actress for her film *Who's That Girl*, a convincing incarnation of the South American icon, which is no mean feat.

Plain Talk

Think of contemporary Cairo, and one of the first things that come to mind is that veritable institution, the café. It is not any exaggeration to say that no street in Cairo is devoid of a café. Some cafés have even distinguished themselves as informal literary and artistic salons. Indeed, many a young writer owes his fame to this or that café-salon.

Naguib Mahfouz used to hold his weekly salon at a series of cafés, the best known of which is Café Riche. This was, until it closed recently, one of Cairo's historical landmarks, an obligatory stop on the itinerary of any visiting writer or artist. During the '60s, Riche became the meeting place of young writers and revolutionaries. It was there that such literary figures as Taha Hussein, Tewfik El-Hakim, Youssef Idris and Ahmed Abdel-Moeti Hegazi used to meet.

Café Riche came into being at the end of the 19th century as a restaurant that also offered musical entertainment. A glimpse at the correspondence between the owner of the café and Cairo Governorate allows one to trace the development of the venue, situated on Soliman Pasha Street (now Talaat Harb). In earlier days, Café Riche used to have a garden with an open air theatre. It is on record that famous Egyptian singers like Sayed Darwish, Saleh Abdel-Hayy and Umm Kulthoum used to perform there.

The history of Riche is, in some ways, a history of contemporary Cairo. It was there in 1919 that the leaders of the revolution met and planned their moves. In his book *The National History of Egypt, 1914-1921*, Abdel-

Rahman El-Rafei says that Café Riche was the meeting place of the "effendis", that is members of the educated middle-class. It was there that some political assassinations were planned and in one case, the attack against one of Egypt's prime ministers, carried out.

The 1940s witnessed a revitalisation of Café Riche, when it became a literary venue. The café acted as a mid-wife, as it were, for a number of projects: the magazine *Al-Katib Al-Masri* (The Egyptian Writer), whose editor-in-chief was Taha Hussein, was launched there. It was at Riche that the literary magazine *Gallerie '68* was conceived, as was *The New Culture*, started by the surrealist painter and poet Ramesses Younan.

Naturally, Riche makes an appearance in several literary works. It is mentioned in Naguib Mahfouz's trilogy and poet Aziz Adib gave one of his collections the title *Riche*. But perhaps the writer who should take the greatest credit for making Riche famous, or in his case infamous, is Naguib Sourour, writer of "The Protocols of the Wisemen of Riche".

The text has now been translated into English by Lana Younis who is writing a PhD thesis to be submitted to Penn University. The topic of Lana's thesis is a comparison between American poet William Carlos Williams and a number of Arab poets whom she has called "The Café Riche Group". Below are a few lines from Lana's translation of Sourour's poem:

First Protocol:
Read nothing be a lamb-
berjack...
And carry a ton of
books...
Place it beside a beer bot-
tle...
or above a chair...
Drink & await the
knights...
who will come one after
the other...
each carrying a ton of
books!

A Voice:
Ye knights of yesterday...
Yesterday passed with the
knights...
behind the clouds of de-
spair...
proceed to Café Riche...
The whole world is Café
Riche...
Where everyone drowns
his odium...
in the depth of the tum-
bler!

Mursi Saad El-Din

21st Cairo International Film Festival: Programme

Thursday, 4 December

Diana
12 noon: Les Silences du Palais (Tunisia)
2.30pm: Honeymoon (Germany)
5pm: Bist Famille (Tunisia)
8pm: Roula (Germany)

Normandy
12 noon: Sango Male (Cameron)
2.30pm: Ma Vie en Rose (Belgium-France)
5pm: Lawn Dogs (UK)
8pm: Suspicious Minds (Canada)

Romy
12 noon: Sidharta (Austria)
2.30pm: Basquiat (USA)
5pm: Crime Time (Netherlands)
8pm: Angelheart (USA)

Metro
12 noon: Repertory (Poland)
2.30pm: Fool's Paradise (USA)
5pm: Too Much Sleep (USA)
8pm: Habit (USA)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Manhattan by Numbers (USA)
2.30pm: The Shadow of the Pharaoh (Morocco)
5pm: Raj Bhai (India)
8pm: Brittle (The Netherlands)

Lido
12 noon: Gotti (USA)
2.30pm: Dream of the Butterfly (Italy)
5pm: My Daughter is Mine (Germany)
8pm: Delinquent (USA)

Miami
12 noon: Silent Touch (Poland)
2.30pm: Touch of Spice (Germany)
5pm: Comme Des Rois (France)
8pm: Propellerblume (Switzerland)

Cairo
12 noon: Illumination (Poland)
2.30pm: Touch of Spice (Germany)
5pm: Comme Des Rois (France)
8pm: Propellerblume (Switzerland)

Karim I
12 noon: Good Life (Spain)
2.30pm: Kiss Me (Germany)
5pm: Serpent's Kiss (UK)
8pm: Two Tard (Romania)

Odeon I
12 noon: Escape (Hungary)
2.30pm: An Unexpected Walk (Bosnia)
5pm: Body Language (USA)
8pm: Sworn to Justice (USA)

Odeon II
12 noon: Drums of Fire (Morocco)
2.30pm: Just Friends (USA)
5pm: Where Are You I Am Here (Italy)

Cosmos I
12 noon: The Passenger (Sweden)
2.30pm: L'Appartement (France)
5pm: Workaholic (Germany)
8pm: The Road to Melville (USA)

Cosmos II
12 noon: Constant Factor (Poland)
2.30pm: Honeymoon (Germany)
5pm: Up on the Roof (UK)
8pm: The Baron (Greece)

El-Salam
12 noon: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)
2.30pm: Home for the Holidays (USA)
5pm: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)

Friday, 5 December

Diana
12 noon: Family Life (Poland)
2.30pm: A la Recherche du Mari de mon Frère (Morocco)
5pm: Dream Lover (USA)
8pm: Suspicious Minds (Canada)

Normandy
12 noon: OK Garage (UK)
2.30pm: Sling Blade (USA)
5pm: The Road to Melville (USA)
8pm: Fargo (USA)

Romy
12 noon: The Illusionist (Netherlands)
2.30pm: Le Ballon D'Or (Guinea-Bissau)
5pm: Up on the Roof (UK)
8pm: Late Full Moon (Bulgaria)

Metro
12 noon: Ma Vie en Rose (Belgium-France)
2.30pm: 17 and Under (USA)
5pm: The Baron (Greece)
8pm: The Outsider (Slovenia)

Karim I
12 noon: Wind Over the City (Greece)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Sidharta (Austria)
2.30pm: Chappagna (Austria)
5pm: Le Mépris (France)
8pm: Centre Femmes d'Egypte (Canada)

Lido
12 noon: The Tale of the Two Gangsters (India)
2.30pm: Fools (South Africa)
5pm: Last Seen Wearing a Blue Skirt (Hungary)
8pm: Fool's Paradise (USA)

Miami
12 noon: Dream Against A White Background (Greece)
2.30pm: Felix (Slovenia)
5pm: Hallaoulou (Tunisia)
8pm: Sworn to Justice (USA)

Cairo
12 noon: Priloge (India)
2.30pm: Eye Witness (Italy)
5pm: Body Language (USA)
8pm: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)

Karim I
12 noon: Brittle (The Netherlands)
2.30pm: Lea (Germany)
5pm: Delinquent (USA)
8pm: Propellerblume (Switzerland)

Odeon I
12 noon: Illumination (Poland)
2.30pm: Honeymoon (Germany)
5pm: The Book of Great Wishes (Poland)
8pm: Traka-Trak (Bulgaria)

Odeon II
12 noon: Madonna and the Child (Philippines)
2.30pm: Dede (France)
5pm: Home for the Holidays (USA)
8pm: Dream of the Butterfly (Italy)

Cosmos I
12 noon: Just Friends (USA)
2.30pm: Dating the Enemy (USA)
5pm: Good Life (Spain)
8pm: Too Much Sleep (USA)

Cosmos II
12 noon: Wind Over the City (Greece)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Yelma (Mali)
2.30pm: The Sin (Egypt)
5pm: Twice a Woman (Netherlands)
8pm: The Vanishing (Netherlands)

Lido
12 noon: Constant Factor (Poland)
2.30pm: Disputed Vote (Spain)
5pm: Eye Witness (Italy)
8pm: Silent Touch (Poland)

2.30pm: Raj Bhai (India)
5pm: Eight Days a Week (USA)
8pm: Where Are You I Am Here (Italy)

El-Salam
12 noon: Strong Shift (Germany)
2.30pm: Jumping At The Hoofbeats (USA)
5pm: Strong Shift (Germany)

Saturday, 6 December

Diana
12 noon: Strange Times (Azerbaijan)
2.30pm: Fool's Paradise (USA)
5pm: Home for the Holidays (USA)
8pm: Dream of the Butterfly (Italy)

Normandy
12 noon: My Daughter is Mine (Germany)
2.30pm: An Unexpected Walk (Bosnia)
5pm: 17 and Under (USA)
8pm: Roula (Germany)

Romy
12 noon: Mother Alone (Sri Lanka)
2.30pm: One Life, Two Trails (Venezuela)
5pm: Eight Days a Week (USA)
8pm: Justice (Germany)

Metro
12 noon: The Guardian Angel (Spain)
2.30pm: Mektoob (Morocco)
5pm: OK Garage (UK)
8pm: Propellerblume (Switzerland)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Yelma (Mali)
2.30pm: The Sin (Egypt)
5pm: Twice a Woman (Netherlands)
8pm: The Vanishing (Netherlands)

Lido
12 noon: Constant Factor (Poland)
2.30pm: Disputed Vote (Spain)
5pm: Eye Witness (Italy)
8pm: Silent Touch (Poland)

Miami
12 noon: The Vanishing (The Netherlands)

Netherlands
12 noon: Just Friends (USA)
2.30pm: Lawn Dogs (UK)
5pm: Punk Lawyer (The Netherlands)

Cairo
12 noon: Les Silences Du Palais (Tunisia)
2.30pm: The Illusionist (The Netherlands)
5pm: Book of Great Wishes (Poland)
8pm: Hallaoulou (Tunisia)

Karim I
12 noon: Honeymoon (Germany)
2.30pm: Dying to Go Home (Portugal/The Netherlands)
5pm: Across the Lake (Macedonia)
8pm: L'Appartement (France)

Odeon I
12 noon: The Passenger (Sweden)
2.30pm: Spanish Soldier (Spain)
5pm: Bist Famille (Tunisia)
8pm: The Baron (Greece)

Odeon II
12 noon: Repertory (Poland)
2.30pm: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)
5pm: The Baron (Greece)

Cosmos I
12 noon: Madonna and the Child (Philippines)
2.30pm: Happy Birthday (Germany)
5pm: Suspicious Minds (Canada)
8pm: Sworn to Justice (USA)

Cosmos II
12 noon: Chappagna (Austria)
2.30pm: Lea (Germany)
5pm: Elias Xenos (Greece)
8pm: Gulls and Gangsters (Hungary)

El-Salam
12 noon: Crime Time (The Netherlands)
2.30pm: Ma Vie En Rose (Belgium)
5pm: Crime Time (The Netherlands)

Sunday, 7 December

Diana
12 noon: Les Résistants (Algeria)
2.30pm: Too Much Sleep (USA)

Spn: OK Garage (UK)
5pm: Sworn to Justice (USA)

Normandy
12 noon: Fool's Paradise (USA)
2.30pm: Bist Famille (Tunisia)
5pm: La Concubine (Canada)
8pm: Asphalt Tango (France/Romania)

Romy
12 noon: Happy Birthday (Germany)
2.30pm: The Guardian Angel (Spain)
5pm: Fools (South Africa)
8pm: Across the Lake (Macedonia)

Metro
12 noon: One Life, Two Trails (Venezuela)
2.30pm: Yevrich Alexei (Russia)
5pm: Home for the Holidays (USA)
8pm: White Side of the End (South Korea)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Lumière Noire (Mauritania)
2.30pm: The Dream of the Butterfly (Italy)
5pm: Dying to Go Home (Portugal-Netherlands)

Lido
12 noon: Mother Alone (Sri Lanka)
2.30pm: Chappagna (Austria)
5pm: Madonna and the Child (Philippines)
8pm: Jumping in the Bone Yard (Poland)

Miami
12 noon: Sidharta (Austria)
2.30pm: Good Life (Spain)
5pm: Asphalt Tango (France/Romania)
8pm: Gulls and Gangsters (Hungary)

Cairo
12 noon: A Story of Love And Death And Madness (Argentina)
2.30pm: Elias Xenos (Greece)
5pm: The Road to Melville (USA)
8pm: Workaholic (Germany)

Karim I
12 noon: Mektoob (Morocco)
2.30pm: Eight Days a Week

USA
12 noon: 17 And Under (USA)
2.30pm: Crime Time (The Netherlands)

Odeon I
12 noon: Brittle (The Netherlands)
2.30pm: Delinquent (USA)
5pm: Up on the Roof (UK)
8pm: Suspicious Minds (Canada)

Odeon II
12 noon: My Daughter is Mine (Germany)
2.30pm: Le Carosse D'Or (France)
5pm: Birdy (USA)
8pm: Eye Witness (Italy)

Cosmos I
12 noon: Sling Blade (USA)
2.30pm: Touch of Spice (Germany)
5pm: The Book of Great Wishes (Poland)
8pm: Justice (Germany)

Cosmos II
12 noon: Illumination (Poland)
2.30pm: George B (USA)
5pm: The Serpent's Kiss (UK)
8pm: Roula (Germany)

El-Salam
12 noon: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)
2.30pm: Home for the Holidays (USA)
5pm: The Eyes, The Mouth (Italy)

Diana
12 noon: Family Life (Poland)
2.30pm: A la Recherche du Mari de mon Frère (Morocco)
5pm: Dream Lover (USA)
8pm: Suspicious Minds (Canada)

Normandy
12 noon: OK Garage (UK)
2.30pm: Sling Blade (USA)
5pm: The Road to Melville (USA)
8pm: Fargo (USA)

Romy
12 noon: The Illusionist (Netherlands)
2.30pm: Le Ballon D'Or (Guinea-Bissau)
5pm: Up on the Roof (UK)
8pm: Late Full Moon (Bulgaria)

Metro
12 noon: Ma Vie en Rose (Belgium-France)
2.30pm: 17 and Under (USA)
5pm: The Baron (Greece)
8pm: The Outsider (Slovenia)

Karim I
12 noon: Wind Over the City (Greece)

Al-Hanagar
12 noon: Yelma (Mali)
2.30pm: The Sin (Egypt)
5pm: Twice a Woman (Netherlands)
8pm: The Vanishing (Netherlands)

Lido
12 noon: Constant Factor (Poland)
2.30pm: Disputed Vote (Spain)
5pm: Eye Witness (Italy)
8pm: Silent Touch (Poland)

Miami
12 noon: The Vanishing (The Netherlands)

4 - 10 December 1997

Al-Ahram

Out of sight

The city of Cairo brings together the housing of rich and poor in one sprawling mass. A newcomer's eyes quickly become accustomed to seeing small, ramshackle houses tucked in the shadow of the palatial towers or hit upon small villages right in the midst of such upper middle class districts as Mohandessin and Dokki. However, with real estate prices rocketing sky-high in the metropolis, the past years have witnessed systematic attempts to move the "eyesores" to outlying areas and replace them with more "suitable", if not necessarily more aesthetically pleasing, structures.

Sabat El-Torgoman in downtown Cairo used to be one such enclave of poverty. Abdel-Rehim Shehata, Cairo's governor, announced last month that investment offers for the 5,200 square metres of land — which was cleared of hundreds of inhabitants in 1982 — had reached over LE20,000 per metre, a fantastic one billion pounds for the whole site. Investors plan to build shopping malls, a small car park and some apartment buildings on the current, government-run car park. Other areas within the city such as El-Mawardi and Hilk Abu Doma will also be up for auction soon.

"When the governorate moved the inhabitants from here [Sabat El-Torgoman] to areas such as El-Zawya El-Hamra and Ain Shams [in north Cairo] we all suffered," said Ahmed Sayed who owns a shop opposite the fenced-in car park in Sabat El-Torgoman. "The people who were moved have great difficulties in commuting to work and the places they live in are no good. Shop owners like me suffered because we depended on these people for business."

Some of Cairo's slum areas are on their way to becoming up-market neighbourhoods as market mechanisms and local government policy act in congruence to remove "eyesores" from the mega-city's ever-expanding centre. Fatemah Farag investigates

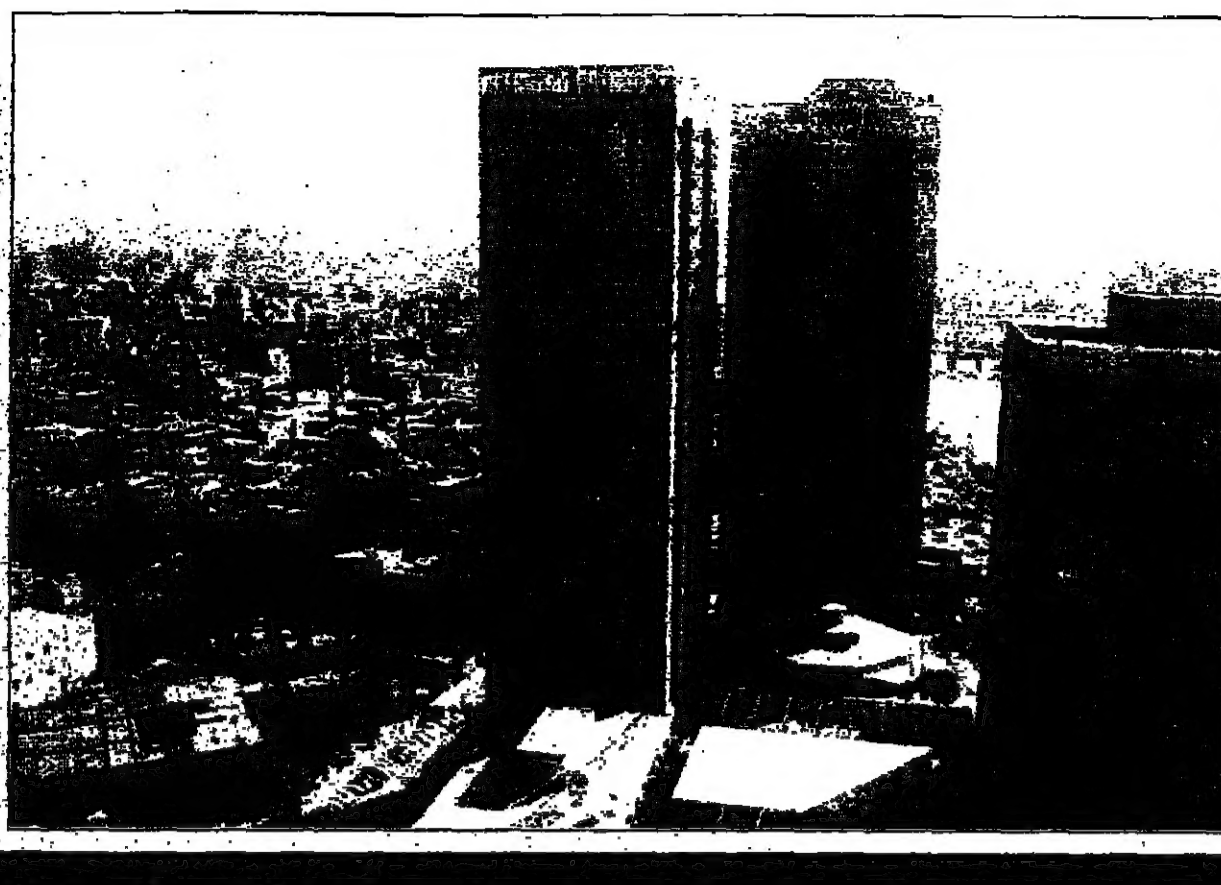


Photo: Sherif Sorob

when it happens," said Saber Ibrahim, who works near the premises of the newspaper Al-Ahram. "When they sold off land in Boulag they built things which are 'touristic' and are of no use to us... Go onto our streets and you will see that we need many things... Our youth need libraries and activity centres. At least now, however, with these new plans we might get some jobs for our youth and shops are definitely better than this parking lot."

"I am really worried," said Hagg Ali who owns a small shop in front of the demolished area. "What if those in the television building decide to expand it tomorrow... what will I do?" People in the neighbouring area admitted that the government had compensated evicted families with housing worth LE13,000 for one-room flats or LE15,000 for two-room flats. However, Hagg Ali, who had many friends among those who left, claimed the compensation was insufficient. "I agree that the buildings didn't look good but the people who lived there for over 50 years had a right to a better compensation," he said.

Said, a metal worker in Boulag who was evicted from Ali Bey Hosni, said: "I am a poor man and I had never held a thousand pounds in my hands before... I was happy at first to have so much cash, but later I realised that the money was hardly enough to put a deposit on a flat that would cost LE100 a month to rent... I only make a little over LE100 as it is."

DISCOVER

An endless treasury of the very finest in white metal furniture, giftware & decorative accessories.

We create new & exclusive designs for your market. With over four decades of exporting heritage, we are the unchallenged connoisseurs in export of the finest white-metal & German silver handicrafts to the Gulf, Middle-East, Europe, USA & many other countries. A wide range of styles & finishes handcrafted to the finest blend to satisfy the most discriminating tastes of our clients.

Friends Arts & Crafts

C-14, Nazimuddin West, New Delhi - 110015 INDIA
Ph: +91-11-4618041, 4618094, Fax: +91-11-4601804
Email: friends@glasgow.vsnl.net.in

INDIA EXPORTERS

India exporters market and promote their products and services around the globe, relying on good quality and competitive prices

LARGEST EXPORTER TO EGYPT
JAMNADAS & CO.

Estd: 1936

Best Quality Shellac

JDTN

GPO Box 631, Calcutta 700001 (India)
Tel: 91 33 252425/255289 Fax: 91 33 4542837 / 2252160
Contact: Mr. Prakash

For a long time, Indian industries and products have been distinguished by their high quality and competitive prices. That is why Indian products have invaded the world market, owing to the excellent skills of

the Indian worker, efficient management, and faith in the value of the produced work. Such accomplishments are what gave Indian exports gave it supremacy and a world-wide reputation.

AGENTS WANTED
For Specialised Batteries

SAB NIFE POWER SYSTEMS LIMITED (SNPS), India, is a Joint Venture between **HBL Limited** and **SAFT NIFE AB**, Sweden. The only company in India manufacturing **Nickel Cadmium Pocket Plate Batteries** and **Power Electronic Systems** under one roof, SNPS has rapidly growing exports and India's most prestigious companies on its customer list. To name a few, **BHEL - India, Daewoo Shipbuilding & Heavy Machinery - Korea, Dubai Electricity & Water Authority - UAE, Hyundai Heavy Industries - Korea, Larsen & Toubro - India, Ministry of Electricity & Water - Kuwait, Oil & Natural Gas Commission - India, Petroleum Development Oman LLC, Reliance Industries - India, Samsung Heavy Industries Ltd. - Korea, Steel Authority of India, Siemens Ltd. - India, Tata Iron & Steel Co. - India.**

SAB NIFE's complete power solutions include:

- NICKEL CADMIUM POCKET PLATE BATTERIES
- DC POWER SYSTEMS
- VALVE REGULATED LEAD ACID BATTERIES
- SWITCH MODE RECTIFIERS.

ISO 9001

SAB NIFE POWER SYSTEMS LIMITED
6-3-781, 'SNEHALATA'
GREENLANDS ROAD, BEGUMPET,
HYDERABAD-500 016
INDIA.

Please contact: Mr. Kenneth Whittenbury / Mr. K. Madhu
Phone: +91 40 3311467, 468
Telefax: +91 40 3317595, 3313508
E-mail: sabnife@SNPSEXPX@HYD.XEEMAIL.eme.vsnl.net.in

ATTENTION!

IMPORTERS • DEPARTMENTAL STORES
• SALES • COMMISSION AGENTS
OF READYMADE GARMENTS

We are manufacturer and supplier of all kinds of best quality readymade garments, made of

- Cotton • Hosiery and Denim like gents' Shirts & Trousers • boys' Baba Suits & T-Shirts • Night wear
- Ladies' wear • Track suits etc.

We wish to export our products to

- Egypt • Gulf states • Saudi Arabia • Kuwait • Oman
- Yemen • Syria • Jordan • Africa • Latin America

and are looking for marketing set-up with importers, departmental stores & sales/commission agents in these countries.

Interested importers, departmental stores & sales/commission agents, contact:

AFFAIR GARMENTS
131, Cotton Street, 3rd Floor, Calcutta 700007 (India)
Ph: 91 33 2312479, Fax: 91 33 2555558/244 4959
E-mail: spabds@glasgow.vsnl.net.in

Castron Technologies Limited
Grey Iron Castings

Contact us for your requirement of graded iron castings of weight ranging from 500 Kg to 4(XXX) Kg single piece. We manufacture ingot mould, bottom plate, cooling plate, door body and door frame etc. for the steel plants.

We also manufacture carbon steel castings of weight ranging from 200 Kg to 3000 Kg.

Contact Address:
Post Nag Nagar,
Dhaiya, Dhanbad,
Bihar 826 004, India
Tel: (91 326) 203390/207886
Fax: (91 326) 207455

MAGNET WIRE

INDO AMERICAN ELECTRICALS LTD.
21, Hemanta Basu Sarani, Calcutta-700 001
Phone: 248-0248/248-0283/248-0334
Gram: EKOMKAR Fax: 91-33-248-4882

SEE THE
PERFECT ROTI RISE..
AND YOUR PROFITS.

DISTRIBUTORS WANTED IN MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Roti Master has a thicker Teflon 2 coating and a uniquely angled pressing handle (to name just two features).

So, if you have a record in distributing consumer products, write to us at the address below with relevant details.

And we'll whet your appetite for business.

PASCON PRODUCTS 133 SHANTY IND. EST. LB PATIL RD. COBBERGON (G) MUMBAI 400004 INDIA TEL: 91 22 6782003 TELEFAX: 91 22 6782000

Manufacturers of Rock Drills & Drifters

Tiger Drill **Bull Drifter**

- LIGHT WEIGHT
- LOW MAINTENANCE
- HIGH PERFORMANCE

HARYSON ENGINEERING CO.

22, Keytuo Industrial Estate,
220 Kondivita Road, M.I.D.C.,
Andheri (East), Bombay - 400 059
Tel: 832 2749/836 9068
Fax: 00-8122-838 0863

You are looking at one of India's best Rock Drill & Drifter

INTERNATIONAL QUALITY

MEDICAL SURGICAL DISPOSABLES & DRESSINGS
CONFORMING TO USFDA & WHO/ISO STANDARDS

We export following international quality products at competitive rates:

- SCALP VEIN SETS
- TRANSFUSION SETS
- FOLEYS CATHETERS
- ADHESIVE TAPES & DRESSINGS
- URINE BAGS
- CATHETERS
- SYRINGES
- LATEX GLOVES

MEDICAL FORMULATIONS ALSO AVAILABLE.

LOOKING FOR DYNAMIC AGENTS ALSO.

BYFORD INTERNATIONAL
A DIVISION OF
MAHANANDA TRANSPORTATIONS & WAREHOUSING LTD.
CB-371, Naraina, Ring Road,
New Delhi-110 028 INDIA
Tel.: 91-11-3294001, 3299250, 3291667
Fax: 91-11-3298423

Pyramid power for the sacred arrow

The turnip-shaped sacred arrow was let fly to "open a new door to the future". To the watching Sphinx, the ancient Japanese ritual must have seemed familiar. Not so for Nevine El-Aref who looked on in awe

Fourteen Japanese visitors and members of the Japanese Embassy assembled at Giza last week to witness Takahito Tomotsune, Grand Master of the Yamato Koryu School of Japanese Traditional Arts in Tokyo, performing an ancient ritual involving archery and the burning of incense at the foot of the Sphinx.

"To perpetuate an ancient tradition during the ninth anniversary of the new emperor [ascending] the throne, and to re-imbue the sacred arrow with Pyramid power, Tomotsune performed a unique ritual out of Japan for the first time," said Hisako Akashi, a housewife and friend of the Grand Master. She explained that by shooting the sacred turnip-shaped arrow from the holy area of the Pyramids and the Sphinx would "open a new door to the future," and she explained that because Tomotsune sees many cultural affinities between Japan and Egypt it was very important to carry out this ritual here.

"It is easy for Japanese people to relate to Egypt," Tomotsune said, explaining that the two countries share many traditions including archery and rituals where incense symbolises power. "It was surprising for me to see a relief of Ramses II carrying out an incense ritual," he said, because in both Ancient Egypt and Japan such gestures represented the power that linked god and humans.

"It is clear that the structure of the bow was not transmitted through my ancestors, but from Egypt," Tomotsune went on. "The bow and arrow we use in Japan are similar to those used in Egypt in ancient times. Both are made of bamboo, which was cultivated in Egypt. Through performing such a ritual, we have been linking our ancient cultures [and] I have created an opportunity to hear and feel the voice of the Ancient Egyptian god."

Tomotsune believes that the two cultures were linked by the ancient Silk Road, and he hopes to discover more roots of his own culture when visiting the ancient sites of Egypt.

Special arrangements had to be made for the archery ceremony at the Sphinx. The ground in front of its paws was covered with wooden blocks and 12 lamps "representing the 12 signs of the zodiac," were placed on both sides as well as a large wooden screen covered with a multi-coloured scarf.

"The screen represents the universe and each colour of the scarf one of the five elements: earth, fire, metal, water and sky," said Akashi.

The arrow used in the performance is specially crafted, and the only one left in Tomotsune's family, made by the last surviving master craftsman. It was first used nine years ago, on the occasion of the ascension of the new Japanese emperor to the throne which took place in the Kasama shrine, one of the biggest in Japan. Tomotsune wore a traditional kamishimo of the Samurai in ancient times for the ceremony. He also carried a ceremonial sword that has been handed down for generations.

Mamdouh Ghazali, archaeological inspector at Giza who accompanied Tomotsune to the plateau the day before, said that Tomotsune and his assistant spent the whole of the previous night inside the Great Pyramid burning incense in Khufu's burial chamber.

The ceremony was attended by members of the Japanese Embassy, senior officials of the Egyptian Tourist Authority, the Ministry of Tourism, and the travel agency that sponsored the ceremony.



Yamato Koryu is the 21st direct lineal descendant of the founder of the Yamato Koryu School, which began traditional arts training 1,200 years ago. He and his family have been passing down traditional Japanese observances, customs and etiquette from generation to generation

Travellers in Egypt

'Father of Egyptology'

Flinders Petrie systematically excavated Egypt from north to south. Lyla Pinch Brock describes the impact this colourful and eccentric figure had on rewriting history

Sir William Flinders Petrie's career as an Egyptologist was determined at birth. Brought into the world by a mother who was nearly 50, "I was supposed stillborn, another nurse dropped me, and so punched in my skull." These early events, he suggested, endowed him with the toughness necessary to explore Egypt in the late 1800s. He was to suffer ill-

health all his life (he was a chronic asthmatic) but it did not deter him from walking 27 miles to the bank to pay workmen when he was excavating at Lahun at the entrance to the Fayoum.

Petrie was an enigmatic and charismatic figure, blessed with energy, determination and ingenuity. Like Darwin and others, he was an agent of change. He was the first to use pottery to date sites, quickly adopted the newly-invented camera for excavation work, and saw the possibilities of the X-ray to examine mummies. Howard Carter, the discoverer of the Tomb of Tutankhamun, described him as "...obviously a man endowed with wit which gave him both confidence and the power to solve problems — in archaeological matters a Sherlock Holmes."

His early education was spotty. He had none until he was six and suffered a nervous breakdown at the age of eight as a result of being crammed with too many languages. "I was taught nothing after, till when I was grown up (when) I took an Oxford extension course in mathematics." His mother instilled in him an interest in minerals and coins, and by the time young Flinders was 13, he understood the value of stratigraphy. His love of mathematics (but not algebra) led him to tramp over the whole of England doing government survey work, staying at cheap lodgings. "All this," he said, "was the best training for a desert life afterwards."

The desert life began in 1880. His father, a civil engineer, inspired by the recent publication of *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramids* by Piazzi-Smith, "decided to take his son and make accurate measurements of the Great Pyramid. Petrie stayed until 1882."

Two years later he was offered his greatest opportunity by the Egypt Exploration Fund, an interest group led by Amelia Edwards, a popular writer and wealthy spinster. They approached Gaston Maspero, director of the Antiquities Service, to fund an excavation. "Send me a

young Englishman," he said, "and I will train him." He already knew of Petrie, and offered to let him excavate, but made it clear that all finds, with a few exceptions, would go to the new museum (forerunner of the Egyptian Museum) in Boulak.

Beginning in 1884, Petrie systematically worked his way from north to south of Egypt,

and aims in Archaeology. Altogether he authored more than a thousand books, articles and reviews.

"Petrie," writes Drower, "realised what no other digger in Egypt had guessed: that much of the true history of Egyptian civilisation was to be read in the trifling things, the potsherds and the bricks, the beads and flints and small domestic objects whose broken fragments filled the debris of every settlement site and every cemetery."

When Petrie's mother died, he looked for a wife. His marriage to Hilda Ustin was a splendid match. She took to a life of excavation like a duck to water, illustrating his finds and inventing her own dig costume, consisting of a pair of bloomers and an overshirt.

Petrie's personality and appearance were impressive. "He was a handsome man," attests Drower, "twinkly eyes, bushy beard, bushy eyebrows." His ability to laugh at himself, which shines through his autobiographies, endeared him to his workmen. He was extremely fair, paid them a number of men from Qift in excavation techniques, and these became the "Qifti", an inherited profession still sought after on excavations in Egypt.

Petrie had many disagreements with the Fund, and also museum officials, whom he accused of selling the things out the back door that he had brought in the front, but he financed some of his excavations by selling objects to private dealers or museums at home and abroad. The British Museum, the Liverpool Museum, the Ashmolean and the Petrie Museum in London, among others, contain his finds. In 1894 he abandoned the Fund and set up his own, the Egyptian Research Account, which later became the British School of Archaeology in Egypt. In 1892 he was appointed to the first chair in Egyptology, Edward Professor at University College London, which he held until 1933. His *Seventy Years in Archaeology* was published in 1931.



excavating countless sites including Tanis, Heliopolis, Giza, Memphis, Hawara and Kahun in the Fayoum, Tel El-Amarna, Abydos and Dendera, in the process making more major archaeological discoveries than any other archaeologist.

Petrie is probably best known for his work at Kahun, where he excavated the village of the Pyramid workmen (and kept the mummies under his bed); Amarna, where he planned the royal residences and managed to preserve the painted plaster pavement now in Cairo Museum.

"From the mass of disordered evidence," wrote British archaeologist Walter Emery, "he established the order of succession of the kings of the First Dynasty so soundly that with small modification his reconstruction of the chronological position of each monarch still stands at the present."

Margaret Drower, Petrie's biographer, says he thought of himself as a "salvage man," a rescuer of what would disappear in the hands of plunderers. He was a prolific recorder, and sent copies of what he called "his journal" to a number of treasured friends. Every year he published his work and held an exhibition in London to display the finds allowed him by Maspero. He not only wrote about sites, but also categories of objects: *Weights and Measures, Tools and Weapons, Egyptian Decorative Art, Historical Scarabs*, and general works on archaeology including *The Religion of Ancient Egypt, Meth-*

Site tours

Buses

Super Jet, East Delta and West Delta buses operate throughout Egypt.

Super Jet

Super Jet stations are located in Almaza (Heliopolis), Tahrir, Giza, Ramsis Street and Cairo Airport. Buses travel to Hurgada, Port Said, Alexandria and Sinai. Tel. 772-663.

Cairo-Alexandria
Services almost every half hour from 5.30am to 10pm, from Tahrir, then Giza, Almaza and the airport. Tickets LE19 until 9pm; LE21 thereafter; from the airport LE24 until 5pm; LE30 thereafter.

A VIP bus with phone access leaves Almaza at 7.15am. Tickets from Almaza LE28; from the airport LE32 each way.

Cairo-Marsa Matruh
Services at 7am departure and 7pm return from Almaza and Tahrir Square. Tickets LE36.

Cairo-Sidi Abdel-Rahman
Services at 6.30am, 7am, 8am, 9am and 3.45pm. Tickets LE32.

Cairo-Port Said
Services every half hour from 6am to 8am; then 9am, 10am, 3pm, and 4.30pm, from Almaza, then Ramsis Street. Tickets LE15 each way.

Alexandria-Port Said
Service 6.45am, from Ramsis Square in Alexandria. Departs Port Said 8.30pm. Tickets LE22 each way.

Cairo-Hurgada
Services 8am and 2pm, from Tahrir, then Giza and Almaza. Departs Hurgada noon and 5pm. Tickets LE40 until 5pm. LE43 thereafter, both each way.

Alexandria-Hurgada
Service 8pm, from Ramsis Square, Alexandria. Departs Hurgada 2.30pm. Tickets LE30 each way.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Service 11pm, from Tahrir, then Almaza. Departs Sharm El-Sheikh 11pm. Tickets LE50 each way.

East Delta Bus Company
Buses travel to North/South Sinai, Suez and Ismailia. Buses to Ismailia and Suez depart from Qalati (near Ramsis Square), Almaza and Tagrid Square (near Heliopolis). Buses to North and South Sinai depart from the Sinai bus station at Abbassia Square. Tel. 482-4753.

Cairo-Ismailia
Services every 45 minutes from 6.30am to 6pm, from Qalati, then Almaza and Tagrid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE5.75; air-conditioned bus LE5.25, one way.

Cairo-Suez
Services every half hour from 6am to 7pm, from Qalati, then Almaza and Tagrid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE5.75; air-conditioned bus LE5, one way.

Cairo-El-Arish
Services every hour from 7.30am to 4pm, from Qalati, then Almaza and Tagrid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE21; air-conditioned bus LE13, one way.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Services every 45 min. from 7am to 6.30pm from Abbassia, then Almaza. Tickets morning LE27; evening LE40, one way.

Cairo-Nuweiba
Service 8am, from Abbassia, then Almaza. Tickets deluxe bus LE31.

West Delta Bus Company
Stations at Tahrir and Almaza. Tel. 243-1846.

Cairo-Hurgada
Services 9am, noon, 3pm, 10.30pm, 10.45pm and 11pm. Tickets LE30 one way.

Cairo-Safage
Services 9am and 3pm. Tickets LE35 one way.

Cairo-Onseir
Service 10pm. Tickets LE38 one way.

Cairo-Luxor
Service 9am. Tickets LE35 one way.

Cairo-Aswan
Service 5pm. Tickets LE50 one way.

Trains

Trains run to Alexandria, Port Said, Luxor and Aswan, from Ramsis Station. Tel. 147 or

575-3555.

Cairo-Luxor-Aswan
"French" deluxe trains with sleepers. Services to Luxor and Aswan 7.40pm and 9pm (reaching Luxor 6.40am and 8am, Aswan 8.40am and 10am). Tickets to Luxor LE294 for foreigners and LE129 for Egyptians; to Aswan LE300 for foreigners; LE141 for Egyptians.

"Spanish" deluxe trains without sleepers. Services to Luxor and Aswan 6.45pm, 8.45pm and 9.45pm. Tickets to Luxor: first class LE51; second class LE31. Tickets to Aswan: first class LE63; second class LE37.

Cairo-Alexandria
"Turbin" trains. VIP train: Service 8am. Tickets first class LE52 with a meal; LE22 without a meal. Standard trains: Services 9am, 11am, noon, 5pm and 7pm. Tickets first class LE22; second class LE17.

"French" trains. Services hourly from 6am to 10.30pm. Tickets first class LE20; second class LE12.

Cairo-Port Said
Services 6.20am and 8.45am. Tickets first class LE45; second class LE26.

EgyptAir
There are between two and five domestic flights daily. Check EgyptAir. Adly 390-0999; Ours 390-2444; or Hilton 772410.

Cairo-Aswan
Tickets LE219 for Egyptians, LE143 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Luxor
Tickets LE259 for Egyptians, LE129 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Hurgada
Tickets LE279 for Egyptians, LE189 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Tickets LE287 for Egyptians, LE195 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Egyptian tourism on the Internet
Here are some useful addresses on the Internet, including tourism magazines, archaeology and travel agency programmes: <http://www.egypt.gov.eg/egypt.htm> is an address through which you can access other useful tourism addresses on the Internet. Here they are: <http://www.egypt.gov.eg/tourism> is the address of Egypt's Tourism Net which provides directories of Egypt's hotels, restaurants, cruise lines, travel agents, transportation companies and tourist attractions.

Egypt's tourism net is a part of many home pages (culture, health, environment, etc) created by the IDSC as a part of the nation's Information Highway. <http://763.121.10.41/tourism> is the key to Egypt Has It All, where Egypt's tourist sites, such as the Red Sea, Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, the Sinai, Alexandria, oases and EFTA offices abroad are described. The magazine also contains colour photographs of Egypt. <http://www.memphis.edu/egypt/egypt.htm> is the address of the University of Memphis, and describes their projects in Egypt.

<http://www.ccg.gov.eg/vivc.edu-4.aspx?travel.html> is the address of Egypt's Tourism and Travel, which organises packages for people who want to take quality tours. It is an Egyptian tour operator, which specialises in tours within Egypt, the Holy Land and the Middle East.

<http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/7210> is the address of The Curse of the Pharaohs. It includes photographs of ancient tombs and temples. <http://www.egypt.horuses> is the address of The Arabian Horse Worldwide. This guide aims to promote the world's most beautiful and versatile horse — the Arabian.

<http://intercoz.com/egypt> is a 2,000-page magazine, published by the Ministry of Tourism, where all Egyptian tourist sites are listed and described. <http://www.datam.com/egypt-city> is the address of the magazine *Cairo Scene*, Cairo's first on-line art and entertainment guide. It is the most up-to-date source on where to go and what to do in Cairo. It has also sections for books and the latest CDs besides proposed places to visit like Wadi Rayan. <http://wat.seas.virginia.edu/~oav/> is the site of Exodus Egypt, a daily site covering home news including political, social and cultural events.

Compiled by Rehab Saad

SINGAPORE 2 NIGHTS & 3 DAYS FROM LE 2,799 per person

Valid from 1 December 1997 to 31 March 1998
Price based on twin sharing. Inclusive of air ticket, hotel, breakfast, half day tour in Singapore, and all taxes.

Contact your travel agent or SIA office, tel. 5750276.

A great way to fly SINGAPORE AIRLINES

سك انظر الفضل

For the first time in a history that began in 1930 in Uruguay, next year's World Cup will see the participation of 32 nations in the month-long tournament. Only 24 countries took part in the last edition in 1994 in the USA. In 1998, the teams will be divided into eight groups of four, with the first two from each advancing to the second round.

The tournament will kick off on June 10 at the newly-constructed Stade de France in Paris, and the final will be played on July 12, at the same venue. The 64 matches in between will be played in 10 different venues around the country; as well as the Stade de France, there will be matches in Montpellier, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lens, Marseilles, Lyon, Nantes, Saint Etienne and at a second Paris venue, the Parc des Princes.

Of the 32 nations who have qualified after two long years of preliminary matches across all five continents, five are from Africa, four from Asia, three from the Americas (Central American, Caribbean), five from South America, and 15 from Europe.

In this first article in this new series, we will be looking at Egypt's own continent — Africa.

For the first time, five nations will be representing Africa in the world's most prestigious football tournament. Hitherto only two nations would represent the continent in the World Cup. However, at a meeting in the USA in 1994, FIFA, the world soccer governing body, decided to give Africa another place in

Full black

This week Iran fought back from two goals down to snatch a 2-2 draw against Australia, thus becoming the last of the 32 nations to qualify for the 1998 World Cup. In the first of a new weekly series profiling the teams who will be competing in France, Inas Mazhar reports from the continent of Africa



South Africa preparing for the World Cup with the hosts, France

Olympics, an under-23 tournament, after beating a powerful Brazilian side in the semifinal and Argentina in the final. One of the first nations to reach the final, Nigeria dominated its group, which included Kenya, Guinea and Burkina Faso. The position of team coach is currently vacant, but top players include Barcelona's Emmanuel Amunike, currently recovering from knee surgery, and later Milan forward Nwankwo Kanu, who is returning to the game after heart surgery.

South Africa: The "Bafana Bafana" (Boys Boys) are playing in their first World Cup. They returned to international soccer in 1992 after a two-decade ban because of the apartheid regime, and went on to win the African Nations Cup at home in 1996. They defeated the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) in a showdown match at home to win the qualifying group — a group that included Zambia and the former Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo. Clive Barker is the coach and top players include midfielder Doctor Khumalo, defender Mark Fish, and striker Phil Ntseke.

Tunisia: Tunisia is playing in its second World Cup, having failed to get past the first round in 1978. They are a strong team, and finished runner-up to South Africa in the 1996 African Nations Cup. They won a particularly hard-fought qualifying group that included Egypt, Namibia and Liberia. Top players are goalkeeper Chokri el Ouairi and forward Zoubeir Beya.

qualified for the World Cup. They were Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia.

Cameroon: The indomitable lions are playing their fourth World Cup. The only African team to have reached the quarter-finals (1990), Cameroon failed to win a single match in America in 1994. They managed to beat Zimbabwe and Angola in a qualifying group that also included Togo. The coach's job is currently shared between four Cameroonians, and a new (foreign) coach is likely to be named soon. Top players are goalkeeper Jacques Song'o, who plays in Spain for Deportivo Le Coruna, defender Pierre Womw and forwards Patrick Mboma and Salomon Olembe.

Morocco: Coached by former French national trainer Henri Michel, Morocco has become the first African nation to qualify four times for the World Cup, and did so with a game to spare after four wins and a draw. The Moroccans also qualified in '70, '86, and '94. They reached the second round in Mexico by coming top of their group before losing to the eventual winners, West Germany.

Nigeria: Known as the "Super Eagles", Nigeria is playing in their second World Cup, after reaching the second round in 1994, where they lost to eventual finalist Italy after leading with only two minutes to go. The Eagles have recently won the gold medal at the 1996

Out of our box

Egypt is fielding three teams in its attempt to carry off the 5th Egyptian International Boxing Championship title, making it four wins out of five. Abeer Anwar pulls off the gloves and gets down to business

The Indoor Hall of the Olympic Centre at Maadi is the venue for both the 5th Egyptian International Boxing Championship (EIBC) and the 17th Arab Boxing Cup which are running concurrently from 2-7 December. Besides Egypt, 12 countries will be taking part. They are: Sudan, Algeria, Palestine, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, China, Uganda and Romania. The EIBC is being held under the auspices of the Supreme Council of Youth and Sports, and with the active support of Dr Abdel-Moneim Emara, the Council's executive manager. It is included in the agenda of the International Amateur Boxing Federation (IABF) as an official event, and is supervised by Dr Ismail Hamed, member

of the IABF and head of the Egyptian and Arab Amateur Boxing Federations (EABF).

All the teams are staying in the Olympic Centre to facilitate the logistics of the event, as boxers have to be weighed in the morning and fight in the afternoon. Each of the guest countries is allowed to enter a maximum of 6 boxers and provide one referee.

Egypt, as host nation, will be entering three teams. The "A-Team" comprises: Mohamed Abdel-Rahman (47kg), Eid Fakry (51kg), Ibrahim Farouk (54kg), Mohamed Abdel-Moneim (57kg), Saleh Abdel-Bari (60kg), Mohamed Mamdouh (63.5kg), Khaled Adel Hamed (67kg), Mohamed Heikal (71kg), Mustafa Farouk (75kg), Nasr Mo-

hamed (81kg), Amr Mustafa (91kg) and Ahmed Abdel-Samad (+91kg). Heikal is a prodigy and a great asset: he took fifth place in the last World Championship in Hungary, although he is only 18 years old. Mustafa is also a force to be reckoned with, having been placed fifth in the 1995 Berlin World Championship. Team A is trained by Dr Abdel-Aziz Ghoneim, who has had to bring in many new players to fill the gaps left by the boxers who are travelling with the military boxing team to participate in the Military Boxing Championship being held in the USA next week. "I have tried out the new faces in a number of friendly matches, and they have proved themselves. I hope they will be able to collect as many medals as they can, so that we can win the title for the fourth time, especially since at this year's event there'll be some really strong competition. Some countries are bringing their best players, who are top-class world boxers — countries such as Ukraine and Algeria."

Team B consists of Soliman Mohamed (48kg), Essam Mustafa (51kg), Mohamed Zayed (54kg), Nader Refaee (57kg), Abdel-Nabi Lotfi (60kg), Fayed Sedik (63.5kg), Fadel Shaaban (67kg), Hesham Abdel-Rahman (71kg), Mohamed El-Harouni (75kg), Ahmed Salem (81kg), Mohamed Reda (91kg) and Mahmoud Fawzy (+91kg). Abdel-Hamid Othman is their trainer.

Egypt's third team (C) is a juniors team. They will be taking part to prepare for the World Championship in Argentina in November '98. "I am going to judge the players and their standard on the basis of this championship, as we do not have

enough money to hold friendly matches with European countries. Those who impress me will stay with the team, the rest will have to go home," commented Dr Diaeddin Mohamed, the juniors' head coach. In addition, Dr Ismail Hamed, head of the EABF, will decide whether the team should go to Argentina or not according to their performance in this event. "If they are below standard, we will save the federation's budget and use it to help the senior team prepare properly," said Hamed. The juniors team consists of Metwalli Ahmed (48kg), Masoud Ahmed (51kg), Ragab Ragab (54kg), Sayed Abdel-Halim (57kg), El-Sayed Khamis (60kg), and Ramadan El-Mansi (63.5kg).

The national team prepared for this week's fights by holding a joint one-week training camp in Cairo with the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian team is made up of three world-ranked players: Falihi Sedari, the world military champion, Oleg Ki Rogan, the Atlanta champion and Ozlukouf Fisilli, the European champion.

The opening ceremony included the competition oath, which was said by Amr Mustafa, the most experienced boxer in the championship. There was also a women's display match, for the first time in the history of the EIBC. The women fought three matches of three rounds, each lasting two minutes. Though they were not taking part in the event itself, they will form the nucleus of a new women's boxing team which will be the first of its kind in either Africa or the Arab world. They were selected through the first "Challenge Championship" for women boxers, which was held last month.

A number of cups are up to be won during this week's championship — the Ganzouri Cup for the overall individual winner, the Abdel-Moneim Emara Cup for Sporting Spirit, the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Cup for Fair Play (team) and the El-Tayeb El-Hewashi Cup for the fair player (individual).

During the championship, a new computer that can be used for judging boxing matches, invented by Amr Sheteha, will also be demonstrated for the first time. The semi-finals and finals of both the EIBC and the 17th Arab Boxing Cup will be held on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th of December at the Olympic Centre.

Four in one

In the ninth week of the National League, Ismail pulled off a surprise advance up the league table to close on Ahli, while Zamalek demonstrated that despite recent disappointments, there's fire left in their bellies yet. Eman Abdel-Moeti warms her hands

It seems that Ismail is the dark horse of the premier league this season. They beat Masri 5-0 to claim their supremacy among the Canal zone clubs. The team are undefeated after nine matches, having won five, and tied four, earning themselves a well-deserved 19 points in the process. Their star player Salah Abu Ghosh turned the tables on Masri, who had controlled the first half of the match, when he was brought on after half time. He restored his team's self-esteem and made three excellent passes from which Magdi El-Sayed scored three goals. Abu Ghosh then took another himself, and Medhat Brakat a fifth.

Ismail are now three points behind Ahli, who have reached the top by the skin of their teeth after a mysterious misunderstanding with their coach Reiner Holman. The German coach suddenly decided to quit the night of Ahli's match against El-Hadid Sakandary and shortly before their crucial encounter with arch rival Zamalek. Holman packed and left for Germany while Ahmed Maher took his place to lead the team to a great victory 3-0 against Sakandary.

Mogaweloon who are currently standing third in the table, suffered an upset when they were beaten 2-1 by Suez. As

Suez fans celebrated the victory, the Mogaweloon players literally cried their hearts out. But their coach Joseph Berger did not sympathise with them, saying they had not followed his instructions and thus should not be crying over split milk. However, the team's management have refused to cut their incentives as punishment for the loss.

Zamalek fans are pretty upset that the country's greatest football power-house after Ahli are still lingering in fourth place. But since it is only the ninth week of the league, they still hope their team may do better in the near future. Actually Zamalek fans have a good excuse, since their team recently managed to reach the finals of the Afro-Asian Football Tournament, where they will meet a Korean team next week to determine the ultimate winner. Zamalek also treated their fans to a spectacular 4-0 win over Shams this week, scoring all of the four goals in the last minute of the match and few minutes of injury time that followed. No one who was present could believe their eyes.

Finally Mitnya, who though they may be standing second to last in the league, still have reasons to be rejoicing after their first victory in the league this season, when they beat Ghazi El-Mahalla currently lying tenth 1-0.

Free kick against Kirch
FOOTBALL'S world governing body FIFA is against pay TV station coverage of the 2002 and 2006 World Cups and is taking steps to ensure free-to-air television coverage.

FIFA's General-Secretary Sepp Blatter said FIFA wanted to guarantee free transmission of World Cup matches on terrestrial channels.

This proposal goes against the plans of German TV magnate Leo Kirch, who announced last month he would be negotiating for television rights after the 1998 finals. His plans were for most matches — apart from the opening match, the semi-finals and finals — to be televised on pay channels.

Spinning to the top

DEFENDING champion American figure skating pair Jenni Meno and Todd Sand captured the short programme at the NHK Trophy in Nagano, Japan, with hopes that their repeated luck would also earn them the Olympic gold. The pair spun side-by-side in methodical synchopation to the classical theme "Pomp and circumstance," wrapping up with a smooth death spiral after an upside-down lift. The pair received thunderous applause when Meno's head almost touched the ice.

In the women's event of the NHK Trophy, Maria Butyrskaya from Russia came in first place (factored placing). In the men's event, Ilia Kulik, also from Russia came first. In Ice Dance, after the compulsory and original dance, Pasha Grishuk and Evgeny Platov of Russia were in first position.

Khan goes to Bombay

CANADA'S Jonathon Power became the first North American player ever to win a Super Series squash tournament, defeating Scotland's Peter Nicol 17-16, 15-13, 14-17, 9-15, 15-8 in the final of the Qatar International Championship. Power, 23, of Toronto, confirmed his breakthrough of the semi-finals, when he beat Pakistan's world no. 1 and top seed Jansher Khan for the first time.

Khan's bitter defeat — which came after he refused to defend his world title this month in Malaysia for the first time ever — has led him to brush off fears over his security and go ahead with plans to make his Indian debut this week. Jansher is also keen to get a look at Bombay, which is due to host next year's World Men's Squash Championships.

The Pakistani, whose country has uneasy ties with India, has signed up for the Bombay \$110,000-prize-list competition in recent years, but has always withdrawn before the event, arguing that the organisers had failed to offer him adequate security.

Bobbing and weaving

FINLAND and Norway signed a letter of intent last week to jointly bid as hosts for the 2006 Winter Olympics. "We've had excellent cooperation," said Tapani Ilkka, president of Finland's National Olympic Committee. "We strongly believe in our joint project and its possibilities."

Between the two traditionally strong winter sport countries, almost all the facilities needed already exist. The Finnish capital deeply wants the games and has a reputation for excellent organising skills, but it doesn't have the slopes for skiing or a bobled track. Lillehammer, Norway, which in 1994 held one of the most successful Winter Games in Olympic history, is in a position to supply both.

Meanwhile, Turkey, determined to push forward with its 2008 Olympic bid, started work last week on an 80,000-seater Olympic stadium. The stadium in Iktelli, on the outskirts of Istanbul, is expected to be constructed in three years by France's Sae International and Campeon Bernard SGE firms in consortium with Turkey's Tekfen. Its cost is estimated at \$90 million.

You know how

SPANISH first and second division football referees are to lay down their whistles and stage a strike this weekend in an unusual protest over what they claim is the barrage of insults against them from clubs, players and coaches. The Spanish Football Federation said that all first and second division referees would nonetheless go ahead as scheduled, with third division referees, for the most part young and inexperienced, being assigned to arbitrate. The strike action is likely to cause controversy as it comes on a weekend when Real Madrid and arch-rival FC Barcelona play matches considered crucial to both teams' struggle to clinch the league leadership.

Five and you're out

ITALY'S Michele Piccirillo is the new European Boxing Union welterweight champion after beating British hope Geoff McCreesh by a technical knock-out. The bout for the vacant title had been evenly balanced until the ninth round when Piccirillo threw a powerful right hook and McCreesh sank to the ground. The British fighter got up after five seconds of the count but the Belgian referee had already seen enough and stopped the fight. (AP, AFP)

Which currency will get you to London for that unexpected meeting?

MasterCard



When you are traveling abroad there is nothing like having the power of a global financial organization in your briefcase. MasterCard gives you the support you need to achieve success, wherever you are, whenever you require it.

MasterCard gives you unmatched convenience. It's accepted at over 14 million locations around the globe and gives you instant access to cash at more than 315,000 MasterCard/Cirrus ATMs in over 100 countries. Should your card be lost or stolen you can get a replacement card within 48 hours.

MasterCard, the universal currency you can rely on anytime, anywhere.

MasterCard

The Future of Money™

Hamza Alaaeddin:

Still waters run deeper than you think



The nomad's home

The first Nubian singer to have left the homeland, Hamza Alaaeddin discusses racism in the United States in a matter-of-fact way, a faint smile on his face. He speaks calmly, in soft tones. "I was shopping in a supermarket in Texas once. A woman came up to me, stared me in the eye, and said: 'Soon you'll have to get permits to breathe, you know.' Of course I knew that she was referring to the fact that I am black, but I quickly pulled a handkerchief from my pocket and covered my nose with it. 'Why, is the pollution so bad around here?' I asked her. She burst out laughing. 'This incident is typical of his way of life in many respects. My grandfather once told me, 'If someone throws a stone at you, there is no need to stand up straight and wait until it hits you. All you have to do is duck. Then you can forget about the stone.' I have never forgotten his words."

Hamza El-Din, as he is called for brevity's sake, takes life in his stride, accepting others as they come. Recordings of his music are unavailable in his own country; they can be found more easily in Tokyo or Paris, but this does not seem to disturb him unduly. He has no wish to change the world or brandish great principles with complicated names. A few principles he takes as facts, explaining them simply: Avicenna's discovery that the colour blue, like the north, or a certain frequency — these will make one calm. Certain scales are for night, others for morning.

He is first and foremost a tolerant man. He has another story to illustrate this point. "A boogyan is walking the streets of a large city late at night. He meets a well-dressed gentleman and asks him for a cigarette. The man tells him that he does not smoke. 'Oh,' says the hoodlum, 'you're one of these health freaks.' He then pulls out a gun

and shoots him point-blank." Hamza minds his own business and forges ahead, stating his position clearly, expecting to be acknowledged and heard. "It is all a question of attitude," he also says. "One usually gets the treatment one attracts with one's behaviour. If I act as if I expect evil, chances are that this is what I will find." He is extremely relaxed, observing and taking in his surroundings without undue anxiety as to the image he projects. Alaaeddin is almost yogi in his certainty that one's behaviour determines one's fate. It is this belief which has allowed him the space to consider every situation with an open mind. His acceptance, and the music which arouses an almost religious awe among his listeners, have taken him all over the world. His first stop was Italy, where he spent five years, studying music and composition in Rome, on a scholarship which he received after graduating from the Faculty of Engineering of Cairo University in 1957.

He had planned to return from Italy to participate in the migration of the Nubians displaced by the construction of the High Dam, although his own family moved much earlier, when the Aswan Dam was raised for the second time, in the '40s. He was six years old when he left his home in Toshki. On his way to Nubia, he stopped to listen to an American friend who talked him into going to the United States instead, to cut his first record. "While waiting for all the formalities which surround the launching of such an event, I appeared in concert in Philadelphia." The record and the concert brought him to the attention of those interested in folklore. One pause led to another, and it was with a measure of self-assurance that he indignantly objected to the fact that no Third World musicians were playing at the concerts held during a human rights confer-

ence, organised by the United Nations in New York that year, 1962. "Human rights are also the concern of Third World countries," he told the organisers; "in fact, you are talking about us." He was told, however, that only classical music was deemed suitable for the venue.

Alaaeddin expressed surprise at what he considered a falsely elitist choice. "If classical music is old, and therefore respectable," he told the organisers, "Nubian music is much older. If you consider classical music to be genteel, do you think I would have wasted five years of my life studying our music, if it were not every bit as complex and refined as classical music?" Having thus convinced them, he was invited to sing during the event. The worldwide distribution of the recording which resulted propelled his career forward, while bringing Nubian music to the attention of international music professionals.

By then he had missed out on the exodus and, when he came back to Cairo, after eight years of absence, it was to visit friends and relatives in their new homes.

"Sometimes one sets out to achieve something and there are as many stumbling blocks as there are steps. At others, the going is so smooth that one has to believe it was meant to be." In the same way, Hamza believes, one does not choose one's house; the home chooses you. He went to Japan on a tour planned to last two weeks. He ended up staying 15 years, teaching Nubian music at a university in Tokyo. His wife, who is Japanese, was one of his students: she plays the viola. When they decided to get married, he took her to meet his family. "If you like them, then we can go ahead," he told her. She liked them, but, more importantly perhaps, they liked her. "When my family realised that she was a Muslim and

spoke Nubian, they welcomed her with open arms." Of their child, Hamza says only, "he came into our lives, stayed a while and didn't like it much, so he soon left."

How did his wife learn Nubian? "All my students have to speak Nubian if they want to understand the music," says Alaaeddin simply, as if it were the easiest thing for Japanese and Americans to learn a foreign language in a few semesters. He is fluent in Italian, Japanese and English. Of course, he points out, all Nubians are bilingual, as they have to learn Nubian and Arabic at the same time. "It makes it easier to tackle other languages, when you already know two from childhood."

When he went to Italy, back in 1957, part of his scholarship had included six months of language studies. "There were many foreigners in the class and the teacher spoke to the Europeans in their respective languages. With me, she had a problem. So she addressed me in Italian from the word go. This is the reason why I was top of the class at the end of the semester, while none of the others managed to master Italian." In the States, at one of the universities where he taught, students of Middle Eastern studies were having difficulties learning Arabic. He gave them a tape recording of Umm Kalthum's *Al-Aida* and told them to listen to it daily. They did so several times a day for three months. Meanwhile, he worked with them on the words. Soon they were able to master a working knowledge of the language.

These days, Alaaeddin is teaching at Berkeley. He was invited by the Ministry of Culture to attend the opening of the Nubia Museum. He found it impressive and well-designed. "All over the world right now, there are exhibitions of Nubian artifacts. Here, we only have a frac-

tion of the treasures that the excavations yielded at the time of the construction of the dam. Our burial grounds remained undiscovered until the successive population movements, as opposed to other parts of Egypt. It is only then that the most precious objects were discovered, secretly removed and finally smuggled out of the country." But Alaaeddin is not bitter about the loss. He travels a great deal and has had the chance to see all the Nubian objects on display in the most important museums in Europe and the United States. He is and will remain a Nubian first and foremost, but now he regards the world as his homeland. His favourite country? "Wherever I am right now." He used to think that the grass was always greener elsewhere, but not anymore. He has matured and learned to love what he has. Egypt, however, will remain the place where his heart lives. "It is the Nile. In the olden days, all Nubian houses were turned towards the Nile. You opened your front door, and there was the river. Now the Nubians have the desert at their doorsteps. This is why they are not happy. But I was born close to the Nile and it has marked me forever. I will always return." Alaaeddin keeps a flat in Maadi, but Aswan is his pole of attraction. "In Cairo they have taken over the river with their casinos, clubs and large boats. In Aswan, in certain areas, the water still flows majestically." He has seen other rivers in other countries: there are many rivers in the world, "but their flow is turbulent, nervous, disturbed. None flows as smoothly as our Nile up south." Whenever he feels nostalgic for a glass of Nile water, he is back. "And I am very often thirsty."

Profile by Fayza Hassan

Pack of Cards

* I wish you could see Al-Ahram's news room these days. It has been completely redecorated and equipped with state-of-the-art high-tech computers. It is specially designed to promote extra speed and efficiency in the dissemination of the news. Soon

our readers will be able to read about important events as they happen or before. Chairman of Al-Ahram Organisation and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram Ibrahim Nafie presided over the very first meeting of the central desk in the revamped, jour-

nalistically- and environmentally-friendly newsroom. All those attending the meeting felt that Al-Ahram was being launched, at that very instant, into the 21st century. A small price to pay: the No Smoking sign will be scrupulously enforced.

* One of my more multitalented friends is George Bahgory, the well-known painter and caricaturist, whose thumbnail sketches of world leaders grace the pages of every issue of the Weekly. Well, George has now turned his talents to writing, producing the incisive, and often poignantly hilarious, *Faltas' Icon*. And just who is the mysterious Faltas? You will have to read the book yourselves to find out, my dears. Curiosity did the cat no good, remember. As a hint, however, the cover of George's semi-autobiographical book is graced with a charming family portrait. A second glance, however, will reveal that the heads of little George, his siblings and his parents are adorned with lovely halos, in



Top: Nafie and senior journalists at Al-Ahram central desk; bottom left: Amin Hewedy's *Perestroika and the Gulf War*; bottom right: Bahgory's *Faltas' Icon*

a most fashionable tone of disrespected gold. Such an original accessory idea! Just the thing for all those Christmas parties...

* More literary productivity from another quarter, but

this time only, the true intellectuals among you should apply. Former minister of defence and head of the intelligence service Amin Hewedy's *Perestroika and the First Gulf War* makes for fascinating reading, believe me.

by Madame Sosostri

Hewedy never ceases to amaze me, as well as his other devoted readers, shocking us with stunning revelations. The suspense nearly brought on tachycardia, and I put down the book just in time. Not, however, before I had turned the last, gasp-inducing page.

* Hear ye, hear ye! The American University in Cairo Press will announce the winner of the 1997 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature during this year's celebrations in honour of 86-year-old Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz at AUC's Oriental Hall on 11 December 1997. If you are lucky enough to be invited to the event, you will have the opportunity to peruse the 300 translations of works by Naguib Mahfouz and other Arab writers, including Tawfiq El-Hakim, Taha Hussein, Youssef Idris, Fathi Ghanem, Ghanem El-Kanassani and many, many others of our very favourite writers, dears. As a special feature, AUC Press will launch the English translation of *The Other Place*, by the 1996 winner of the Mah-

fouz Medal, Ibrahim Abdel-Meguid. As you must know by now, the award consists of a silver medal and \$1000 cash prize. This year the panel of judges includes Ali El-Risi, Abdel-Moneim Taha, Hoda Wadi, Ferial Ghazoul and Mark Lutz, di-

rector of the American University in Cairo Press. I can't wait to hear the name of the lucky winner! I dears, have not joined the competition, out of consideration for the more budding talents lurking out there in the literary wilderness.

The Economist

It is possible to have a deep, meaningful relationship on a weekly basis.

The Economist

For further information call: (02)3391 090

Al-Ahram Est. Al Galaa Street, Cairo

A home in Cairo

Without pollution or crowd!

VILLA FOR SALE

Beg. Cairo - Alexandria Desert Road

300 m² Building + Private garden, fully grown trees + Private swimming pool.

Call: 3040276

مكتبة النور